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FATHER PAYNE

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BY
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MASTER OF MAGDALENE COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE

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THIRD IMPRESSION (SECOND EDITION).

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PREFACE

TO THE

SECOND EDITION.

It always interests me to find how many of the literary aspirants who ask me to read and comment on their work say that they have no desire to get money or fame, but only wish to do good. It is quite sincerely said, I believe; but what puzzles me is why this should be felt about writing, which is, after all, an artistic pleasure, when no amateur would think or say it about sketching or playing the violin. People who draw, or who make music, recognise it frankly as a source of personal enjoyment, the recording or reproducing of something that has seemed to them beautiful. Even if an amateur does not think his sketch or his performance of a piece of music to be faultlessly beautiful, yet he cherishes a belief that parts of it are excellent, like the curate's egg; and his wish to show his picture or to have his piece listened to is probably ultimately even more a desire that his skill should be recognised than a philanthropic wish to give or to share pleasure. The aim of writing poems and books is somewhat more complicated. The chief part of it, in the case of people who love books, is the joy of creating for themselves, out of their own words and thoughts, the same sort of artistic structure which they have so enjoyed contemplating and admiring, and which has moved them so strangely, in the pages of beloved writers. One's

own ideas and visions of beauty, how rare and precious they seem!

I have myself always had a secret inclination to publish my books anonymously, and I have published seven of my books so, four of which have been, from the point of view of circulation, the most successful books I have written: *The Upton Letters*, *The College Window*, *The House of Quiet*, and *The Thread of Gold*. The advantage of anonymous publication is that the book is judged on its own merits, and owes nothing to the writer's position or friends. And then there is the amusement of a little secret, and the pleasure of hearing what is said and thought about one's work, without any of the inconveniences of recognition. Recognition has its penalties, because all that one says in public, above one's own signature, is commented upon from the standpoint of one's profession and reputation; and in England, where the standard of artistic values is not very high, and where people are frankly more interested in personality and position than in ideas, it is tiresome not to be able to say frankly what one thinks, without having it all accounted for by one's birth and nurture and circumstances and occupations. Besides, if you read a book from the point of view of the author's personality, you are apt to read into it not what the writer says but what you expect him to say; and further, a writer is credited with believing, consistently and continuously, all that he says in his books, when a book is often the expression of a mood or a phase, or even of a romantic dream.

For instance, I have myself suffered, since I published *The College Window*, from being supposed to be an extremely secluded and leisurely person, turning from ancient folios to contemplate the

sunset, and back again to my folio, without anything particular to do except to rejoice in gentle sentiments. But *The College Window* was really a little romance, born of a period when I exchanged the busy life of a schoolmaster for the quiet of college rooms. Other work flowed in speedily, and I soon became again a much-occupied man, with innumerable business engagements and a large correspondence; and on the whole I enjoy such a life more than the contemplative life. Or rather, I find that periods of leisure and reflection are wholesome and delightful if they are earned by a busy life and interspersed with it, while I am sure that, for myself at least, uninterrupted contemplation is fruitful in unreality, and destroys the sense of proportion.

Father Payne was written in leisurely intervals of a very busy life, when a continuous book would have been impossible to achieve. *Father Payne* is a series of episodes and ideas, with a slender thread running through it, the thread of a single personality. The thoughts and problems here dealt with are the kind of things which confront the mind, when dealing with a large variety of temperaments, and with ideas and fancies struck out by reading and conversation; and it was possible to work these out in little spaces of leisure. I have often wished to write novels—indeed, I have written several, though I have only published one; but these have all suffered from the difficulty of keeping a plot and a number of characters continuously in view in a much-interrupted life, as well as from what Cardinal Newman modestly described, in his preface to *Callista*, as "the sheer inability to devise personages or incidents"; or, perhaps, not so much the inability to devise them, as the lack of a dramatic faculty, which means the power

of regulating the interplay of character, and of concentrating incident round a particular motive. I expect that the writer of novels must have the gift of grouping his material thus, in relation to a single interest, while his free intervals ought to be filled with the inactivity which, as Mr. Belloc says, is the breeding-ground for inspiration. But one must do the best one can when one is dragged at the wheels of life, instead of driving one's own chariot, and to follow my fate has always been my destiny.

The aim of *Father Payne* is to present a character deeply and eagerly interested in life and experience, and most of all in other people. Father Payne did not feel capable of doing good professionally, or of influencing the world on a large scale; but he found that he lived his real life best in close contact with a small circle of young and generous people, with whom he expanded frankly and freely, giving his best to them, and determined, so far as he could, to keep his little corner of the world fresh and kind and alert and happy. It was intended to be in a way a mild protest against the present fashion in the world of dispersing one's energy over vaguely philanthropic movements and groups and schemes, which results in a large number of well-meaning people making desultory arrangements to civilise each other. I find myself endlessly invited to join associations by persons who seem to suppose that if you can establish an organisation with official designations and occasional meetings, something will come of it. It is all a dim feeling after corporateness, and against individualism and isolation. But an association is really only like the hem of a handkerchief, a thing to keep a work and a purpose together; and it ought to grow out of a work and not precede it. *Father Payne* was meant to be a

picture of a man who minded his business, and lived life in a small circle for all he was worth. Further, he was meant to stand as a protest against what I believe is a deep-seated fault at the present time—the endless criticism and controversy which rages over everything worth doing and saying, as well as over many things decidedly not worth either doing or saying. There seem to me to be hundreds of busy people in the world whose only pleasure is that of deriding or wrecking other people's experiments, on the ground that they are not complete or comprehensive enough. The fact is that all experiments and all institutions are the expression of various temperaments; and instead of trying to conform other people to our own opinions, and censuring them if they decline to adopt them, we ought to encourage others to find their real life, wherever they can best discover it; and the hope of the future is the federation of kindred institutions, rather than the mashing of human differences together into a vapid and tasteless unity, which can never be more than a name.

It may be remembered that in the *Odyssey*, when Odysseus comes home again after his twenty years of adventures, he goes to see his old father Laertes on his little upland farm. He finds his father very frail and squalid,' in cap and gaiters of ragged leather, fumbling in the orchard with a little tree which he is planting. Odysseus, with his curious relish for making those whom he loved uncomfortable, tests his old father, as Homer says, with mocking words, and reduces the old man to tears. But it is never explained why Laertes had given up the chieftainship and the big house, and left everything to his son to manage. It had all happened before the story begins; but I have always hoped

and believed that Laertes was a man who, like Father Payne, knew what suited him. He was tired perhaps of fighting and ruling, and he did not see why he should continue thus; so he had gone off to the innocent pleasure of his hill homestead, to potter about with his garden and his stock, and to live his own chosen life, as knights in the middle ages would enter monasteries and become simple monks, leaving the rough cares and ambitions of the world behind, and finding prayer and freedom and loving companionship better and more innocent than the anxious cares and feverish aims of the world. It was not mere laziness or listlessness; it was a belief that struggling with other people for wealth and fame and power is not the best way or the only way of learning what life has to teach us.

Father Payne's view was that life was a very wonderful and mysterious thing, well worth living and thinking about and talking about; and that it is possible to do fully as much for the world by practising positive virtues, and making a little centre of wholesome, laborious, and eager life, as by striving for reputation and success or indulging in mild association. He did not for a moment think that his was the only way to live; but he thought that many people missed living what might have been a very real and active life of their own by deferring too much to conventional ideals, and by regarding too much the possible disapproval of conventional spectators and critics.

But I must admit that Father Payne took the bit between his teeth and ran away with me, and, indeed, with everything else in the book; he became, as I wrote, so real a figure to me, that even now he is far more actual than many persons whom I have met in the flesh; while I never pass through

the little village near Cambridge, where in my imagination I laid the scene of the book, without half expecting to see Father Payne emerge musing from the gate of the Hall, give me a quick look, and pass on to something more interesting and absorbing.

Well, the book grew, and I put into it more care and fancy, and even enjoyment, than I have put into most of my books; and I thought when I had finished it, that I would test my friends, like Odysseus, by a parable of my own making. The result being a failure at once double and complete. In order to conceal myself more effectually, I published at the same time a volume of Essays, written long before for an American magazine; and, unfortunately for my precaution, there was a page in the book of Essays which was practically identical with a page in *Father Payne*, so that I was at once discovered by a careful reviewer. And next there came out in America in a daily paper a review of *Father Payne*, called, I believe, *The Mystery of Father Payne*, with a big portrait of myself, so that the secret has been given away; but as most people had at the time more serious and better things to think about, the book was not generally recognised as mine, though it has been a good deal read in America; and I have been reproached for sneaking on the stage in disguise, while the book has only succeeded in making its way into the hands of a comparatively small number of my readers and friends.

So I am advised, and I believe that it is the best way out, to confess the authorship publicly and frankly. I will not pretend that I do not wish *Father Payne* to be read. I wish it very much. I do not maintain that it is very profound or far-reaching. But it is an honest attempt to depict a brave and generous character with a lively interest

in the world, and to speak good-naturedly, and I should like to think humorously, about many attractive and interesting things. I wrote much of it in a time of public anxiety, and when I had many private cares and sorrows. I enjoyed writing it, because it helped me to look out of the cloud on to many beautiful and peaceable things which I desired no less but rather more, because we were in the midst of war, and a war which, as a true lover of peace, justice, and freedom, I fervently believe to be noble and sacred above all wars that have ever been waged. But the tension of such a time is severe, and I believe that it is wise to relieve that as far as possible, while I can most truly declare that, as the psalmist said, I did not forget Jerusalem in my mirth. And not only do I feel sure it is wise to relieve strain, but I think that many of us who cannot put our desire to help into more warlike deeds tend to grow bitter and angry, with an unwholesome acrimony, if we do not try to see beyond the tumult. And thus *Father Payne* is—or at least I tried to make it—an outlook into the new earth, which will be born more generous and patient and serious from the womb of battle; and the book is, I say it in all earnestness, a sincere attempt to work out, in a little scene, the great principles of the Love of God and the love of one's neighbour, on which simple and mighty ideas all the hopes and glories of the future without any possibility of doubt depend.

ARTHUR CHRISTOPHER BENSON.

MAGDALENE COLLEGE,
CAMBRIDGE:
October 1916.

PREFACE

TO THE

FIRST EDITION.

OFTEN as I have thought of my old friend "Father Payne," as we affectionately called him, I had somehow never intended to write about him, or if I did, it was "like as a dream when one awaketh," a vision that melted away at the touch of common life. Yet I always felt that his was one of those rich personalities well worth depicting, if the attitude and gesture with which he faced the world could be caught and fixed. The difficulty was that he was a man of ideas rather than of performance, suggestive rather than active: and the whole history of his experiment with life was evasive, and even to ordinary views fantastic.

Besides, my own life has been a busy one, full of hard ordinary work: it was not until the war gave me, like many craftsmen, a most reluctant and unwelcome space of leisure, that I ever had the opportunity of considering the possibility of writing this book. I am too old to be a combatant, and too much of a specialist in literature to transmute my activities. I lately found myself with my professional occupations suddenly suspended, and moreover, like many men who have followed a wholly peaceful profession, plunged in a dark bewilderment as to the onset of the forces governing the social life of Europe. In the sad inactivity

which followed, I set to work to look through my old papers, for the sake of distraction and employment, and found much material almost ready for use, careful notes of conversations, personal reminiscences, jottings of characteristic touches, which seemed as if they could be easily shaped. Moreover, the past suddenly revived, and became eloquent and vivid. I found in the beautiful memories of those glowing days that I spent with Father Payne—it was only three years—some consolation and encouragement in my distress.

This little volume is the result. I am well aware that the busy years which have intervened have taken the edge off some of my recollections, while the lapse of time has possibly touched others with a sunset glow. That can hardly be avoided, and I am not sure that I wish to avoid it.

I am not here concerned with either criticising or endorsing Father Payne's views. I see both inconsistencies and fallacies in them. I even detect prejudices and misinterpretations of which I was not conscious at the time. I have no wish to idealise my subject unduly, but it is clear to me, and I hope I have made it clear to others, that Father Payne was a man who had a very definite theory of life and faith, and who at all events lived sincerely and even passionately in the light of his beliefs. Moreover, when he came to put them to the supreme test, the test of death, they did not desert or betray him: he passed on his way rejoicing.

He used, I remember, to warn us against attempting too close an analysis of character. He used to say that the consciousness of a man, the

intuitive instinct which impelled him, his *attack* upon experience, was a thing almost independent both of his circumstances and of his reason. He used to take his parable from the weaving of a tapestry, and say that a box full of thread and a loom made up a very small part of the process. It was the inventive instinct of the craftsman, the faculty of designing, that was all-important.

He himself was a man of large designs, but he lacked perhaps the practical gift of embodiment. I looked upon him as a man of high poetical powers, with a great range of hopes and visions, but without the technical accomplishment which lends these their final coherence. He was fully aware of this himself, but he neither regretted it nor disguised it. The truth was that his interest in existence was so intense, that he lacked the power of self-limitation needed for an artistic success. What, however, he gave to all who came in touch with him, was a strong sense of the richness and greatness of life and all its issues. He taught us to approach it with no preconceived theories, no fears, no preferences. He had a great mistrust of conventional interpretation and traditional explanations. At the same time he abhorred controversy and wrangling. He had no wish to expunge the ideals of others, so long as they were sincerely formed rather than meekly received. Though I have come myself to somewhat different conclusions, he at least taught me to draw my own inferences from my own experiences, without either deferring to or despising the conclusions of others.

The charm of his personality lay in his independence, his sympathy, his eager freshness of view,

his purity of motive, his perfect simplicity; and it is all this which I have attempted to depict, rather than to trace his theories, or to present a philosophy which was always concrete rather than abstract, and passionate rather than deliberate. To use a homely proverb, Father Payne was a man who filled his chair!

Of one thing I feel sure, and that is that wherever Father Payne is, and whatever he may be doing —for I have as absolute a conviction of the continued existence of his fine spirit as I have of the present existence of my own—he will value my attempt to depict him as he was. I remember his telling me a story of Dr. Johnson, how in the course of his last illness, when he could not open his letters, he asked Boswell to read them for him. Boswell opened a letter from some person in the North of England, of a complimentary kind, and thinking it would fatigue Dr. Johnson to have it read aloud, merely observed that it was highly in his praise. Dr. Johnson at once desired it to be read to him, and said with great earnestness, "*The applause of a single human being is of great consequence.*" Father Payne added that it was one of Johnson's finest sayings, and had no touch of vanity or self-satisfaction in it, but the vital stuff of humanity. That I believe to be profoundly true: and that is the spirit in which I have set all this down.

September 30, 1915.

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FATHER PAYNE

I

FATHER PAYNE

It was a good many years ago, soon after I left Oxford, when I was twenty-three years old, that all this happened. I had taken a degree in Classics, and I had not given much thought to my future profession. There was no very obvious opening for me, no family business, no influence in any particular direction. My father had been in the Army, but was long dead. My mother and only sister lived quietly in the country. I had no prosaic and practical uncles to push me into any particular line; while on coming of age I had inherited a little capital which brought me in some two hundred a year, so that I could afford to wait and look round. My only real taste was for literature. I wanted to write, but I had no very pressing aspirations or inspirations. I may confess that I was indolent, fond of company, but not afraid of comparative solitude, and I was moreover an entire dilettante. I read a good many books, and tried feverishly to write in the style of the authors who most attracted me. I settled down at home, more or less, in a country village where I knew everyone; I travelled a little; and I paid occa-

sional visits to London, where several of my undergraduate and school friends lived, with a vague idea of getting to know literary people; but they were not very easy to meet, and, when I did meet them, they did not betray any very marked interest in my designs and visions.

I was dining one night at a restaurant with a College friend of mine, Jack Vincent, whose tastes were much the same as my own, only more strenuous; his father and mother lived in London, and when I went there I generally stayed with them. They were well-to-do, good-natured people; but, beyond occasionally reminding Jack that he ought to be thinking about a profession, they left him very much to his own devices, and he had begun to write a novel, and a play, and two or three other masterpieces.

That particular night his father and mother were dining out, so we determined to go to a restaurant. And it was there that Vincent told me about "Father" Payne, as he was called by his friends, though he was a layman and an Anglican. He had heard all about him from an Oxford man, Leonard Barthrop, some years older than ourselves, who was one of the circle of men whom Father Payne had collected about him. Vincent was very full of the subject. He said that Father Payne was an elderly man, who had been for a good many years a rather unsuccessful teacher in London, and that he had unexpectedly inherited a little country estate in Northamptonshire. He had gradually gathered about him a small knot of men, mainly interested in literature, who were lodged and boarded free, and were a sort of informal community, bound by

no very strict regulations, except that they were pledged to produce a certain amount of work at stated intervals for Father Payne's inspection. As long as they did this, they were allowed to work very much as they liked, and Father Payne was always ready to give criticism and advice. Father Payne reserved the right of dismissing them if they were idle, quarrelsome, or troublesome in any way, and exercised it decisively. But Barthrop had told him that it was a most delightful life; that Father Payne was a very interesting, good-natured, and amusing man; and that the whole thing was both pleasant and stimulating. There were certain rules about work and hours, and members of the circle were not allowed to absent themselves without leave, while Father Payne sometimes sent them off for a time, if he thought they required a change. "I gather," said Vincent, "that he is an absolute autocrat, and that you have to do what he tells you; but that he doesn't preach, and he doesn't fuss. Barthrop says he has never been so happy in his life." He went on to say that there were at least two vacancies in the circle—one of the number had lately married, and another had accepted a journalistic post. "Now what do you say," said Vincent, "to us two trying to go there for a bit? You can try it, I believe, without pledging yourself, for two or three months; and then if Father Payne approves, and you want to go on, you can regularly join."

I confess that it seemed to me a very attractive affair, and all that Vincent told me of the place, and particularly of Father Payne, attracted me. Vincent said that he had mentioned me to Bar-

throp, and that Barthrop had said that I might have a chance of getting in. It appeared that we should have to go down to the place to be interviewed.

We made up our minds to apply, and that night Vincent wrote to Barthrop. The answer was favourable. Two days later Vincent received a note from Father Payne, written in a big, finely-formed hand, to the effect that he would be glad to see Vincent any night that he could come down, and that I might also arrange an interview, if I wished, but that we were to come separately. "Mind," said the letter, "I can make no promises and can give no reasons; but I will not keep either of you waiting."

Vincent went first. He spent a night at Aveley Hall, as the place was called. I continued my visit to his people, and awaited his return with great interest.

He told me what had happened. He had been met at the station by an odd little trap, had driven up to the house—a biggish place, close to a small church, on the outskirts of a tiny village. It was dark when he arrived, and he had found Father Payne at tea with four or five men, in a flagged hall. There had been a good deal of talk and laughter. "He is a big man, Father Payne, with a beard, dressed rather badly, like a country squire, very good-natured and talkative. Everyone seemed to say pretty much what they liked, but he kept them in order, too. I could see that!" Then he had been carried off to a little study and questioned. "He simply turned me inside out," said Vincent, "and I told him all my biography, and everything

I had ever done and thought of. He didn't seem to look at me much, but I felt he was overhauling me somehow. Then I went and read in a sort of library, and then we had dinner—just the same business. Then the men mostly disappeared, and Barthrop carried me off for a talk, and told me a lot about everything. Then I went to my room, a big, ugly, comfortable bedroom; and in the morning there was breakfast, where people dropped in, read papers or letters, did not talk, and went off when they had done. Then I walked about in a nice, rather wild garden. There seemed a lot of fields and trees beyond, all belonging to the house, but no park, and only a small stable, with a kitchen-garden. There were very few servants that I saw—an old butler and some elderly maids—and then I came away. Father Payne just came out and shook hands, and said he would write to me. It seemed exactly the sort of thing I should like. I only hope we shall both get in."

It certainly sounded attractive, and it was with great curiosity that I went off on the following day, as appointed, for my own interview.

II

AVELEY

THE train drew up at a little wayside station soon after four o'clock on a November afternoon. It was a bare, but rather an attractive landscape. The line ran along a wide, shallow valley, with a stream running at the bottom, with many willows, and pools fringed with withered sedges. The fields

were mostly pastures, with here and there a fallow. There were a good many bits of woodland all about, and a tall spire of pale stone, far to the south, overtopped the roofs of a little town. I was met by an old groom or coachman, with a little ancient open cart, and we drove sedately along pleasant lanes, among woods, till we entered a tiny village, which he told me was Aveley, consisting of three or four farmhouses, with barns and ricks, and some rows of stone-built cottages. We turned out of the village in the direction of a small and plain church of some antiquity, behind which I saw a grove of trees and the chimneys of a house surmounted by a small cupola. The house stood close by the church, having an open space of grass in front, with an old sundial, and a low wall separating it from the churchyard. We drove in at a big gate, standing open, with stone gate-posts. The Hall was a long, stone-built Georgian house, perhaps a hundred and fifty years old, with two shallow wings and a stone-tiled roof, and was obviously of considerable size. Some withered creepers straggled over it, and it was neatly kept, but with no sort of smartness. The trees grew rather thickly to the east of the house, and I could see to the right a stable-yard, and beyond that the trees of the garden. We drew up—it was getting dark—and an old manservant with a paternal air came out, took possession of my bag, and led me through a small vestibule into a long hall, with a fire burning in a great open fireplace. There was a gallery at one end, with a big organ in it. The hall was paved with black and white stone, and there were some comfortable chairs, a cabinet or two, and some dim paintings on the

walls. Tea was spread at a small table by the fire, and four or five men, two of them quite young, the others rather older, were sitting about on chairs and sofas, or helping themselves to tea at the table. On the hearth, with his back to the fire, stood a great, burly man with a short, grizzled beard and tumbled gray hair, rather bald, dressed in a rough suit of light-brown homespun, with huge shooting boots, whom I saw at once to be my host. The talk stopped as I entered, and I was aware that I was being scrutinised with some curiosity. Father Payne did not move, but extended a hand, which I advanced and shook, and said: "Very glad to see you, Mr. Duncan—you are just in time for tea." He mentioned the names of the men present, who came and shook hands very cordially. Barthrop gave me some tea, and I was inducted into a chair by the fire. I thought for a moment that I was taking Father Payne's place, and feebly murmured something about taking his chair. "They're all mine, thanks!" he said with a smile, "but I claim no privileges." Someone gave a faint whistle at this, and Father Payne, turning his eyes but not his head towards the young man who had uttered the sound, said: "All right, Pollard, if you are going to be mutinous, we shall have a little business to transact together, as Mr. Squeers said." "Oh, I'm not mutinous, sir," said the young man—"I'm quite submissive—I was just betrayed into it by amazement!" "You shouldn't get into the habit of thinking aloud," said Father Payne; "at least not among bachelors —when you are married you can do as you like!— I hope you are polite?" he went on, looking round

at me. "I think so," I said, feeling rather shy. "That's right," he said. "It's the first and only form of virtue! If you are only polite, there is nothing that you may not do. This is a school of manners, you know!" One of the men, Rose by name, laughed—a pleasant musical laugh. "I remember," he said, "that when I was a boy at Eton, my excellent but very bluff and rough old tutor called upon us, and was so much taken up with being hearty, that he knocked over the coal-scuttle, and didn't let anyone get a word in; and when he went off in a sort of whirlwind, my old aunt, who was an incisive lady, said in a meditative tone: 'How strange it is that the only thing that the Eton masters seem able to teach their boys is the only thing they don't themselves possess!'"

Father Payne uttered a short, loud laugh at this, and said: "Is there any chance of meeting your aunt?" "No, sir, she is long since dead!" "Blew off too much steam, perhaps," said Father Payne. "That woman must have had the steam up! I should have liked to have known her—a remarkable woman! Have you any more stories of the same sort about her?"

"Not to-day," said Rose, smiling.

"Quite right," said Father Payne. "You keep them for an acceptable time. Never tell strings of stories—and, by the way, my young friends, that's the art of writing. Don't cram in good things—space them out, Barthrop!"

"I think I can spread the butter as thin as anyone," said Barthrop, smiling.

"So you can, so you can!" said Father Payne

enthusiastically, "and very thin slices too! I give you full credit for that!"

The men had begun to drift away, and I was presently left alone with Father Payne. "Now you come along of me!" he said to me; and when I got up, he took my arm in a pleasant fashion, led me to a big curtained archway at the far end of the hall, under the gallery, and along a flagged passage to the right. As we went he pointed to the doors—"Smoking-room—Library"—and at the end of the passage he opened a door, and led me into a small panelled room with a big window, closely curtained. It was a solid and stately place, wholly bare of ornament. It had a writing-table, a bookcase, two armchairs of leather, a fine fireplace with marble pillars, and an old painting let into the panelling above it. There was a bright, unshaded lamp on the table. "This is my room," he said, "and there's nothing in it that I don't use, except those pillars; and when I haul on them, like Samson, the house comes down. Now you sit down there, and we'll have a talk. Do you mind the light? No? Well, that's all right; as I want to have a good look at you, you know! You can get a smoke afterwards—this is business!"

He sate down in the chair opposite me, and stirred the fire. He had fine, large, solid hands, the softness of which, like silk, had struck me when I shook hands with him; and, though he was both elderly and bulky, he moved with a certain grace and alertness. "Tell me your tale from the beginning," he said. "Don't leave out any details—I like details. Let's have your life and death and Christian sufferings, as the tracts say."

He heard me with much patience, sometimes smiling, sometimes nodding. When I had finished, he said: "Now I must ask you a few questions—you don't mind if they are plain questions—rather unpleasant questions?" He bent his brows upon me and smiled. "No," I said, "not at all." "Well, then," he said, "where's the vocation in all this? This place, to be brief, is for men who have a real vocation for writing, and yet never would otherwise have the time or the leisure to train for it. You see, in England, people think that you needn't train for writing—that you have just got to begin, and there you are. Very few people have the money to wait a few years—they have to write, not what they want to write, but what other people want to read. And so it comes about that by the time that they have earned the money and the leisure, the spring is gone, the freshness is gone, there's no invention and no zest. Writing can't be done in a little corner of life. You have to give up your life to it—and then that means giving up your life to a great deal of what looks like pure laziness—loafing about, looking about, travelling, talking, mooning; that is the only way to learn proportion; and it is the only way, too, of learning what not to write about—a great many things that are written about are not really material for writing at all. And all this can't be done in a drivelling mood—you must pick your way if you are going to write. That's a long preface; but I mean this place to be a place to give men the right sort of start. I happen to be able to teach people, more or less, how to write, if they have got the stuff in them—and to be frank,

I'm not sure that you have! You think this would be a pleasant sort of experience—so it can be; but it isn't done on slack and chattering lines. It is just meant to save people from hanging about at the start, a thing which spoils a lot of good writers. But it's deadly serious, and it isn't a dilettante life at all. Do you grasp all that?"

"Yes," I said, "and I believe I can work! I know I have wasted my time, but it was not because I wanted to waste time, but because the sort of things I have always had to do—the classics—always seemed to me so absolutely pointless. No one who taught me ever distinguished between what was good and what was bad. Whatever it was—a Greek play, Homer, Livy, Tacitus—it was always supposed to be the best thing of the kind. I was always sure that much of it was rot, and some of it was excellent; but I didn't know why, and no one ever told me why."

"You thought all that?' said he. "Well, that's more hopeful! Have you ever done any essay work?'"

"Yes," I said, "and that was the worst of all—no one ever showed me how to do it in my own way, but always in some one else's way."

He sate a little in silence. Then he said: "But mind you, that's not all! I don't think writing is the end of life. The real point is to feel the things, to understand the business, to have ideas about life. I don't want people to learn how to write interestingly about things in which they are not interested—but to be interested first, and then to write if they can. I like to turn out a good writer, who can say what he feels and believes. But I'm

just as pleased when a man tells me that writing is rubbish, and that he is going away to do something real. The real—that's what I care about! I don't want men to come and pick up grains of truth and reality, and work them into their stuff. I have turned out a few men like that, and those are my worst failures. You have got to care about ideas, if you come here, and to get the ideas into shape. You have got to learn what is beautiful and what is not, because the only business of a real writer is with beauty—not a sickly exotic sort of beauty, but the beauty of health and strength and generous feeling. I can't have any humbugs here, though I have sent out some humbugs. It's a hard life this, and a tiring life; though if you are the right sort of fellow, you will get plenty of fun out of it. But we don't waste time here; and if a man wastes time, out he goes."

"I believe I can work as hard as anyone," I said, "though I have shown no signs of it—and anyhow, I should like to try. And I do really want to learn how to distinguish between things, how to know what matters. No one has ever shown me how to do that!"

"That's all right!" he said. "But are you sure you don't want simply to make a bit of a name—to be known as a clever man? It's very convenient, you know, in England, to have a label. Because I want you clearly to understand that this place of mine has nothing whatever to do with that. I take no stock in what is called success. This is a sort of monastery, you know; and the worst of some monasteries is that they cultivate dreams. That's a beautiful thing in its way, but it isn't what

I aim at. I don't want men to drug themselves with dreams. The great dreamers don't do that. Shelley, for instance—his dreams were all made out of real feeling, real beauty. He wanted to put things right in his own way. He was enraged with life because he was fine, while Byron was enraged with life because he was vulgar. Vulgarity—that's the one fatal complaint; it goes down deep to the bottom of the mind. And I may as well say plainly that that is what I fight against here."

"I don't honestly think I am vulgar," I said.

"Not on the surface, perhaps," he said, "but present-day education is a snare. We are a vulgar nation, you know. That is what is really the matter with us—our ambitions are vulgar, our pride is vulgar. We want to fit into the world and get the most we can out of it; we don't, most of us, just want to give it our best. That's what I mean by vulgarity, wanting to take and not wanting to give."

He was silent for a minute, and then he said: "Do you believe in God?"

"I hardly know," I said. "Not very much, I am afraid, in the kind of God that I have heard preached about."

"What do you mean?" he said.

"Well," I said, "it's rather a large question—but I used to think, both at school and at Oxford, that many of the men who were rather disapproved of, that did quite bad things, and tried experiments, and knocked up against nastiness of various kinds, but who were brave in their way and kind, and not mean or spiteful or fault-finding, were more the sort of people that the force—or whatever it is,

behind the world—was trying to produce than many of the virtuous people. What was called virtue and piety had something stifling and choking about it, I used to think. I had a tutor at school who was a parson, and he was a good sort of man, too, in a way. But I used to feel suddenly dreary with him, as if there were a whole lot of real things and interesting things which he was afraid of. I couldn't say what I thought to him—only what I felt he wanted me to think. That's a bad answer," I went on, "but I haven't really considered it."

"No, it isn't a bad answer," he said. "It's all right! The moment you feel stifled with anyone, whatever the subject is—art, books, religion, life—there is something wrong. Do you say any prayers?"

"No," I said, "to be honest, I don't."

"You must take to it again," he said. "You can't get on without prayer. And if you come here," he said, "you may expect to hear about God. I talk a good deal about God. I don't believe in things being too sacred to talk about—it's the bad things that ought not to be mentioned. I am interested in God, more than I am interested in anything else. I can't make Him out—and yet I believe that He needs me, in a way, as much as I need Him. Does that sound profane to you?"

"No," I said, "it's new to me. No one ever spoke about God to me like that before."

"We have to suffer with Him!" he said in a curious tone, his face lighting up. "That is the point of Christianity, that God suffers, because He wants to remake the world, and cannot do it all at once. That is the secret of all life and hope,

that if we believe in God, we must suffer with Him. It's a fight, a hard fight; and He needs us on His side. But I won't talk about that now; yet if you don't want to believe in God, and to be friends with Him, and to fight and suffer with Him, you needn't think of coming here. That's behind all I do. And to come here is simply that you may find out where He needs you. Why writing is important is, because the world needs freer and plainer talk about God—about beauty and health and happiness and energy, and all the things which He stands for. Half the evil comes from silence, and the end of all my experiments is the word in the New Testament, Ephphatha—Be opened! That is what I try for, to give men the power of opening their hearts and minds to others, without fear and yet without offence. I don't want men to attack things or to criticise things, but just to speak plainly about what is beautiful and wholesome and true. So you see this isn't a place for lazy and fanciful people—not a fortress of quiet, and still less a place for asses to slake their thirst! We don't set out to amuse ourselves, but to perceive things, and to say them if we can. My men must be sound and serious, and they must be civil and amusing too. They have got to learn how to get on with each other, and with me, and with the village people—and with God! If you want just to dangle about, this isn't the place for you; but if you want to work hard and be knocked into shape, I'll consider it."

There was something tremendous about Father Payne! I looked at him with a sense of terror. His face dissolved in a smile. "You needn't look

at me like that!" he said. "I only want you to know exactly what you are in for!"

"I would like to try," I said.

"Well, we'll see!" he said. "And now you must be off!" he added. "We shall dine in an hour—you needn't dress. Here, you don't know which your room is, I suppose?"

He rang the bell, and I went off with the old butler, who was amiable and communicative. "So, you think of becoming one of the gentlemen, sir?" he said. "If you'll have me," I replied. "Oh, that will be all right, sir," he said. "I could see that the Father took to you at first sight!"

He showed me my room—a big bare place. It had a small bed and accessories, but it was also fitted as a sitting-room, with a writing-table, an armchair, and a bookcase full of books. The house was warmed, I saw, with hot water to a comfortable temperature. "Would you like a fire?" he said. I declined, and he went on: "Now if you lived here, sir, you would have to do that yourself!" He gave a little laugh. "Anyone may have a fire, but they have to lay it, and fetch the coal, and clean the grate. Very few of the gentlemen do it. Anything else, sir? I have put out your things, and you will find hot water laid on."

He left me, and I flung myself into the chair. I had a good deal to think about.

III

THE SOCIETY

A VERY quiet evening followed. A bell rang out above the roof at 8.15. I went down to the hall, where the men assembled. Father Payne came in. He had changed his clothes, and was wearing a dark, loose-fitting suit, which became him well—he always looked at home in his clothes. The others wore similar suits or smoking jackets. Father Payne appeared abstracted, and only gave me a nod. A gong sounded, and he marched straight out through a door by the fireplace into the dining-room.

The dining-room was a rather grand place, panelled in dark wood, and with a few portraits. At each end of the room was a section cut off from the central portion by an oak column on each side. Three windows on one side looked into the garden. It was lighted by candles only. We were seven in all, and I sate by Father Payne. Dinner was very plain. There was soup, a joint with vegetables, and a great apple-tart. The things were mostly passed about from hand to hand, but the old butler kept a benignant eye upon the proceedings, and saw that I was well supplied. There was a good and simple claret in large flat-bottomed decanters, which most of the men drank. There was a good deal of talk of a lively kind. Father Payne was rather silent, though he struck in now and then, but his silence imposed no constraint on the party. He was pressed to tell a story for my

benefit, which he did with much relish, but briefly. I was pleased at the simplicity of it all. There was only one man who seemed a little out of tune—a clerical-looking, handsome fellow of about thirty, called Lestrange, with an air of some solemnity. He made remarks of rather an earnest type, and was ironically assailed once or twice. Father Payne intervened once, and said: "Lestrange is perfectly right, and you would think so too, if only he could give what he said a more secular twist. 'Be soople in things immaterial,' Lestrange, as the minister says in *Kidnapped*." "But who is to judge if it *is* immaterial?" said Lestrange rather pertinaciously. "It mostly is," said Father Payne. "Anything is better than being shocked! It's better to be ashamed afterwards of not speaking up than to feel you have made a circle uncomfortable. You must not rebuke people unless you really hate doing it. If you like doing it, you may be pretty sure that it is vanity; a Christian ought not to feel out of place in a smoking-room!"

The whole thing did not take more than three-quarters of an hour. Coffee was brought in, very strong and good. Some of the party went off, and Father Payne disappeared. I went to the smoking-room with two of the men, and we talked a little. Finally I went away to my room, and tried to commit my impressions of the whole thing to my diary before I went to bed. It certainly seemed a happy life, and I was struck with the curious mixture of freedom, frankness, and yet courtesy about the whole. There was no roughness or wrangling or stupidity, nor had I any sense either of exclusion, or of being elaborately included in the life of the

circle. I would call the atmosphere brotherly, if brotherliness did not often mean the sort of frankness which is so unpleasant to strangers. There certainly was an atmosphere about it, and I felt too that Father Payne, for all his easiness, had somehow got the reins in his hands.

The next morning I went down to breakfast, which was, I found, like breakfast at a club, as Vincent had said. It was a plain meal—cold bacon, a vast dish of scrambled eggs kept hot by a spirit lamp and a hot-water arrangement. You could make toast for yourself if you wished, and there was a big fresh loaf, with excellent butter, marmalade, and jam—not an ascetic breakfast at all. There were daily papers on the table, and no one talked. I did not see Father Payne, who must have come in later.

After breakfast, Barthrop showed me the rooms of the house. The library was fitted up with bookshelves and easy-chairs for reading, with a big round oak table in the centre. The floor was of stained oak boards and covered with rugs. There was also a capacious smoking-room, and I learned that smoking was not allowed elsewhere. It was, in fact, a solid old family mansion of some dignity. There were three or four oil paintings in all the rooms, portraits and landscapes. The general tone of decoration was dark—red wall-papers and fittings stained brown. It was all clean and simple, and there was a total absence of ornament. I went and walked in the garden, which was of the same very straightforward kind—plain grass, shrubberies, winding paths, with comfortable wooden seats in sheltered places; one or two big beds, evidently

of old-fashioned perennials, and some trellises for ramblers. The garden was adjoined by a sort of wilderness, with big trees and ground-ivy, and open spaces in which aconites and snowdrops were beginning to show themselves. Father Payne, I gathered, was fond of the garden and often worked there; but there were no curiosities—it was all very simple. Beyond that were pasture-fields, with a good many clumps and hedgerow trees, running down to a stream, which had been enlarged into a deep pool at one place, where there was a timbered bathing-shed. The stream fed, through little sluices, a big, square pond, full, I was told, in summer of bulrushes and water-lilies. I noticed a couple of lawn-tennis courts, and there was a bowling-green by the house. Then there was a large kitchen-garden, with standards and espaliers, and box-edged beds. The stables, which were spacious, contained only a pony and the little cart I had driven up in, and a few bicycles. I liked the solid air of the big house, which had two wings at the back, corresponding to the wings in front; the long row of stone pedimented windows, with heavy white casements, was plain and stately, and there were some fine magnolias and wisterias trained upon the walls. It all looked stately, and yet home-like; there was nothing neglected about it, and yet it looked wholesomely left alone; everything was neat, but nothing was smart.

I was strolling about, enjoying the gleams of bright sunshine and the cold air, when I saw Father Payne coming down the garden towards me. He gave me a pleasant nod: I said something about the beauty of the place; he smiled, and said

"Yes, it is the kind of thing I like—but I am so used to it that I can hardly even see it! That's the worst of habit; but there is nothing about the place to get on your nerves. It's a well-bred old house, I think, and knows how to hold its tongue, without making you uncomfortable." Then he went on presently: "You know how I came by it? It's an odd story. It had been in my family, till my grandfather left it to his second wife, and cut my father out. There was a son by the second wife, who was meant to have it; but he died, and it went to a brother of the second wife, and his widow left it back to me. It was an entire surprise, because I did not know her, and the only time I had ever seen the house was once when I came down on the sly, just to look at the old place, little thinking I should ever come here. She had some superstition about it, I fancy! Anyhow, while I was grubbing away in town, fifteen years ago, and hardly able to make two ends meet, I suddenly found myself put in possession of it; and though I am poor, as squires go, the farms and cottages bring me in quite enough to rub along. At any rate it enabled me to try some experiments, and I have been doing so ever since. Leisure and solitude! Those are the only two things worth having that money can buy. Perhaps you don't think there's much solitude about our life? But solitude only means the power to think your own thoughts, without having other people's thoughts trailed across the track. Loneliness is quite a different thing, and that's not wholesome."

He strolled on, looking about him. "Do you ever garden?" he said. "It's the best fun in the

world—making plants do as *you* like, while all the time they think they are doing as *they* like. That's the secret of it! You can't bully these wild things, but they are very obedient, as long as they believe they are free. They are like children; they will take any amount of trouble as long as you don't call it work."

Presently we heard the clatter of hoofs in the stable-yard. "That's for you!" he said. "Will you go and see that they have brought your things down? I'll meet you at the door." I went up and found my things had been packed by the old butler. I gave him a little tip, and he said confidentially: "I daresay we shall be seeing you back here, sir, one of these days." "I hope so," I said, to which he replied with a mysterious wink and nod.

Father Payne shook hands. "Well, good-bye!" he said. "It's good of you to have come down, and I'm glad to have made acquaintance, whatever happens—I'll drop you a line." I drove away, and he stood at the door looking after me, till the little cart drove out of the gate.

IV

THE SUMMONS

I MUST confess that I was much excited about my visit; the whole thing seemed to me to be almost too good to be true, and I hardly dared hope that I should be allowed to return. I went back to town and rejoined Vincent, and we talked much about the delights of Aveley.

The following morning we each received a letter in Father Payne's firm hand. That to Vincent was very short. It ran as follows:

DEAR VINCENT,—*I shall be glad to take you in if you wish to join us, for three months. At the end of that time, we shall both be entirely free to choose. I hope you will be happy here. You can come as soon as you like; and if Duncan, after reading my letter, decides to come too, you had better arrange to arrive together. It will save me the trouble of describing our way of life to each separately. Please let me have a line, and I will see that your room is ready for you.—Sincerely yours,*

C. PAYNE.

"That's all right!" said Vincent, with an air of relief. "Now what does he say to you?"

My letter was a longer one. It ran:

MY DEAR YOUNG MAN,—*I am going to be very frank with you, and to say that, though I liked you very much, I nearly decided that I could not ask you to join us. I will tell you why. I am not sure that you are not too easy-going and impulsive. We should all find you agreeable, and I am sure you would find the whole thing great fun at first; but I rather think you would get bored. It does not seem to me as if you had ever had the smallest discipline, and I doubt if you have ever disciplined yourself; and discipline is a tiresome thing, unless you like it. I think you are quick, receptive, and polite—all that is to the good. But are you serious? I found in you a very quick perception, and you held up a flattering mirror with great spontaneity to my mind and heart—that was*

probably why I liked you so much. But I don't want people here to reflect me or anyone else. The whole point of my scheme is independence, with just enough discipline to keep things together, like the hem on a handkerchief.

But you may have a try, if you wish; and in any case, I think you will have a pleasant three months here, and make us all sorry to lose you if you do not return. I have told your friend Vincent he can come, and I think he is more likely to stay than you are, because he is more himself. I don't suppose that he took in the whole place and the idea of it as quickly as you did. I expect you could write a very interesting description of it, and I don't expect he could.

Still, I will say that I shall be truly sorry if, after this letter, you decide not to come to us. I like your company; and I shall not get tired of it. But to be more frank still, I think you are one of those charming and sympathetic people who is tough inside, with a toughness which is based on the determination to find things amusing and interesting—and that is not the sort of toughness I can do anything with. People like yourself are incapable as a rule of suffering, whatever happens to them. It's a very happy disposition, but it does not grow. You are sensitive enough, but I don't want sensitiveness. I want men who are not sensitive, and who yet can suffer at not getting nearer and more quickly than they can to the purpose ahead of them, whatever that may be. It is a stiff sort of thing that I want. I can help to make a stiff nature pliable; I'm not very good at making a pliable nature stiff. That's the truth.

So I shall be delighted—more than you think—if

you say "Yes," but in a way more hopeful about you if you say "No."

Come with Vincent, if you come; and as soon as you like.—Ever yours truly,

C. PAYNE.

"Does he want me to go, or does he not?" I said. "Is he letting me down with a compliment?"

"Oh no," said Vincent, "it's all right. He only thinks that you are a butterfly which will flutter by, and he would rather like you to do a little fluttering down there."

"But I'm not going to go there," I said, "to wear a cap and bells for a bit, and then to be spun when I have left my golden store, like the radiant morn; he puts me on my mettle. I *will* go, and he *shall* keep me! I don't want to fool about any more."

"All right!" said Vincent. "It's a bargain, then! Will you be ready to go the day after to-morrow? There are some things I want to buy, now that I'm going to school again. But I'm awfully relieved—it's just what I want. I was getting into a mess with all my work, and becoming a muddled loafer."

"And I an elegant trifler, it appears," I said.

V

THE SYSTEM

WE went off together on the Saturday, and I think we were both decidedly nervous. What were we in for? I had a feeling that I had plunged headlong into rather a foolish adventure.

We did not talk much on the way down; it was all rather solemn. We were going to put the bit in our mouths again, and Father Payne was an unknown quantity. We both felt that there was something decidedly big and strong there to be reckoned with.

We arrived, as before, at tea-time, and we both received a cordial greeting. After tea Father Payne took us away, and told us the rules of the house. They were simple enough; he described the day. Breakfast was from 8.30 to 9.15, and was a silent meal. "It's a bad thing to begin the day by chattering and arguing," said Father Payne. Then we were supposed to work in our own rooms or the library till one. We might stroll about, if we wished, but there was to be no talking to anyone else, unless he himself gave leave for any special reason. Luncheon was a cold meal, quite informal, and was on the table for an hour. There was to be no talk then either. From two to five we could do as we liked, and it was expected that we should take at least an hour's exercise, and if possible two. Tea at five, and work afterwards. At 8.15, dinner, and we could do as we wished afterwards, but we were not to congregate in anyone's room, and it was understood that no one was to go to another man's bedroom, which was also his study, at any time, unless he was definitely invited, or just to ask a question. The smoking-room was always free for general talk, but Father Payne said that on the whole he discouraged any gatherings or cliques. The point of the whole was solitary work, with enough company to keep things fresh and comfortable.

He said that we were expected to valet ourselves entirely, and that if we wanted a fire, we must lay it and clean it up afterwards. If we wanted to get anything, or have anything done, we could ask him or the butler. "But I rather expect everyone to look after himself," he said. We were not to absent ourselves without his leave, and we were to go away if he told us to do so. "Sometimes a man wants a little change and does not know it," he said.

Then he also said that he would ask us, from time to time, what we were doing—hear it read, and criticise it; and that one of the most definite conditions of our remaining was that he must be satisfied that we really were at work. If we wanted any special books, he said, we might ask him, and he could generally get them from the London Library; but that we should find a good many books of reference and standard works in the library.

He told us, too, of certain conditions of which we had not heard—that we were to be away, either at home, or travelling wherever he chose to send us, for three months in the year, and that he supplied the funds if necessary. Moreover, for one month in the summer he kept open house. Half of us were to go away for the first fortnight in July, and the other half were to stay and entertain his guests, or even our own, if we wished to invite them; then the other half of the men returned, and had their guests to entertain, while the first half went away; and that during that time there was to be very little work done. We were not to be always writing, but there was to be reading,

about which he would advise. Once a week there was a meeting, on Saturday evening, when one of the men had to read something aloud, and be generally criticised. "You see the idea?" he said. "It sounds complicated now, but it really is very simple. It is just to get solid work done regularly, with a certain amount of supervision and criticism, and, what is more important still, real intervals of travelling. I shall send you to a particular place for a particular purpose, and you will have to write about it on lines which I shall indicate. The danger of this sort of life is that of getting stale. That's why I don't want you to see too much of each other. And last of all," he said, rather gravely, "you must do what I tell you to do. There must be no mistake about that—but with all the apparent discipline of it, I believe you will find it worth while."

Then he saw us each separately. He inquired into our finances. Vincent had a small allowance from his parents, about £50, which he was told to keep for pocket-money, but Father Payne said he would pay his travelling expenses. I gathered that he gave an allowance to men who had nothing of their own. He told me that I should have to travel at my own expense, but he was careful first to inquire whether my mother was in any way dependent on me. Then he said to me with a smile: "I am glad you decided to come—I thought my letter would have offended you. No? That's all right. Now, I don't expect heroic exertions—just hard work. Mind," he said, "I will add one thing to my letter, and that is that I think you *may* make a success of this—if you *do* take to it, you

will do well; but you will have to be patient, and you may have a dreary time; but I want you to tell me exactly at any time how you are feeling about it. You won't be driven, and I think your danger is that you may try to make the pace too much."

He further asked me exactly what I was writing. It happened to be some essays on literary subjects. He mentioned a few books, and told me it would do very well to start with. He was very kind and fatherly in his manner, and when I rose to go, he put his arm through mine and said: "Come, it will be strange if we can't hit it off together. I like your presence and talk, and am glad to think you are in the house. Don't be anxious! The difficulty with you is that you will foresee all your troubles beforehand, and try to bolt them in a lump, instead of swallowing them one by one as they come. Live for the day!" There was something magnetic about him, for by these few words he established a little special relation with me which was never broken.

When he dismissed me, I went and changed my things, and then came down. I found that it was the custom for the men to go down to the hall about eight. Father Payne said that it was a great mistake to work to the last minute, and then to rush in to dinner. He said it made people nervous and dyspeptic. He generally strolled in himself a few minutes before, and sate silent by the fire.

Just as it struck eight, and the hum of the clock in the hall died away, a little tune in harmony, like a gavotte, was played by softly-tingling tiny bells.

I could not tell where the music came from; it seemed to me like the Ariel music in *The Tempest*, between earth and heaven, or the "chiming shower of rare device" in *The Beryl Stone*.

Father Payne smiled at the little gesture I involuntarily made. "You're right!" he said, when it was over. "How *can* people talk through that? It's the clock in the gallery that does it—they say it belonged to George III. I hope, if so, that it gave him a few happier moments! It is an ingenious little thing, with silver bells and hammers; I'll show it you some day. It rings every four hours."

"I think I had rather not see the machinery," I said. "I never heard anything so delicious."

"You're right again," said Father Payne;

"'The isle is full of noises,
Sounds and sweet airs, that give delight and hurt not.'

Let it stay at that!"

I little thought how much I should grow to connect that fairy gavotte with Aveley. It always seemed to me like a choir of spirits. I would awake sometimes on summer nights and hear it chiming in the silent house, or at noon it would come faintly through the passages. That, and the songs of the birds in the shrubberies, always flash into my mind when I think of the place; because it was essentially a silent house, more noiseless than any I have ever lived in; and I love the thought of its silence and of its fragrance—for that was another note of the place. In the hall stood great china jars with pierced covers, which were always full of pot-pourri; there was another in the library, and another in

Father Payne's study, and two more in the passage above, which looked out by the little gallery upon the hall. Silence and fragrance always, in the background of all we did; and outlining itself upon the stillness, the little melody, jetting out like a fountain of silver sound.

VI

FATHER PAYNE

THAT evening after dinner we two were left with Barthrop in the smoking-room, and we talked freely about Father Payne. Barthrop said that his past was a little mysterious. "He was at Marlborough, you know, and Oxford; and after that, he lived in town, took pupils, and tried to write—but he was not successful, and had much difficulty in getting along." "What is his line exactly?" said Vincent. "That's just it," said Barthrop, "he hasn't any line. He has a wide knowledge of things, and is quicker at picking up the drift of a subject than anyone I know; and he has a rare power of criticism. But he isn't anything in particular. He can't write a bit, he is not a speaker, he isn't learned, he can teach able people, but he couldn't teach stupid men—he hasn't enough patience. I can't imagine any line of life for which he would be exactly fitted: and yet he's the biggest person I have ever met; he carries us all along with him, like a river. You can't resist him, you can't contradict him. That is the one danger, that he exerts more influence than he knows,

so that when you are with him, it is hard to be quite yourself. But he puts the wind into your sails; and, my word, he can take it out of your sails, if he likes! I have only seen him really angry about twice, and then it was really appalling. Once was when a man lied to him, and once was when a man was impertinent to him. He simply blasted them with his displeasure—that is the only word. He hates getting angry—I expect he had a bad temper once—and he apologises afterwards; but it's no use—it's like a thunderstorm apologising to a tree which has been struck. I don't think he knows his strength. He believes himself to be sensitive and weak-willed—I have heard him say so. The fact is that he dislikes doing an unpleasant thing or speaking severely; and he will take a lot of trouble to avoid a scene, or to keep an irritable man in a good temper. But if he lets himself loose! I can't express to you the sort of terror I have in thinking of those two occasions. He didn't say very much, but he looked as if he were possessed by any number of devils."

"He was never married, I suppose?" I said.

"No," said Barthrop, "and yet he seems to make friends with women very easily—in fact, they tend to fall in love with him, if I may say so. He has got a beautiful manner with them, and he is simply devoted to children. You will see that they really rather worship him in the village. He knows everyone in the place, and never forgets a fact about them."

"What does he *do* mostly?" I said.

"I really don't know," said Barthrop. "He is rather a solitary man. He very often has one of

us in for an hour in the evening or morning—but we don't see much of him in the afternoon; he gardens or walks about. He has a quick eye for things, birds and plants, and so on; and he can find more nests in an hour than any man I ever saw. Sometimes he will go and shut himself up in the church—he is rather fond of going to church; he always goes to the Communion."

"Does he expect us to go?" I said.

"No," said Barthrop. "He rather likes us to go, but he doesn't at all like us going to please him. 'I want you to want to go,' I heard him say once, 'but I don't want you to go *because* I want you.' And he has no particular views, I think, about the whole thing—at least not for other people."

"Tell me some more about him," I said.

"What is there to say?" said Barthrop. "He is just there—the biggest fact on the horizon. Oh yes, there is one thing; he is tremendously devoted to music. We have some music in the evenings very often. You saw the organ in the gallery—it is rather a fine one, and he generally has someone here who can play. Lestrange is a first-rate musician. Father Payne can't play himself, but he knows all about it, and composes sometimes. But I think he looks on music as rather a dangerous indulgence, and does not allow himself very much of it. You can see how it affects him. And you mustn't be taken in by his manner. You might think him heavy and unperceptive, with that quiet and rather secret eye of his; yet he notices everything, always, and far quicker than anyone else. But it is hard to describe him, because he can't do anything much, and you might think he was in-

dolent; and yet he is the biggest person I have ever seen, the one drawback being that he credits other people with being big too."

"I notice that you call him 'Father Payne,'" said Vincent. "Does that mean anything in particular?"

"No," said Barthrop, smiling. "It began as a sort of joke, I believe—but it seemed to fit him; and it's rather convenient. We can't begin by calling him 'Payne,' and 'Mr. Payne' is a little formal. Some of the men call him 'sir,' but I think he likes 'Father Payne' best, or simply 'Father.' You will find it exactly expresses him."

"Yes," I said, "I am sure it does!"

I did not sleep much that night. The great change in my life had all taken place with such rapidity and ease that I felt bewildered, and the thought of the time ahead was full of a vague excitement. But most of all the thought of Father Payne ran in my mind. I regarded him with a singular mixture of interest, liking, admiration, and dread. Yet he had contrived to kindle a curious flame in my mind. It was not that I fully understood what he was working for, but I was conscious of a great desire to prove to him that I could do something, exhibit some tenacity, approve myself to him. I wanted to make him retract what he had said about me; and, further on, I had a dim sense of an initiation into ideas, familiar enough, but which had only been words to me hitherto—power, purpose, seriousness. They had been ideas which before this had just vaguely troubled my peace, clouds hanging in a bright sky. I had the sense that there were some duties which I ought to perform, efforts to

be made, ends to fulfil; but they had seemed to me expressed in rather priggish phrases, words which oppressed me, and ruffled the surface of my easy joy. Now they loomed up before me as big realities which could not be escaped, hills to climb, with no pleasant path round about their bases. I seemed in sight of some inspiring secret. I could not tell what it was, but Father Payne knew it, might show it me?

Thus I drowsed and woke, a dozen times, till in the glimmer of the early light I rose and drew back my curtains. The dawn was struggling up fitfully in the east, among cloudy bars, tipping and edging them with smouldering flashes of light, and there was a lustrous radiance in the air. Then, to my surprise, looking down at the silent garden, pale with dew, I saw the great figure of Father Payne, bare-headed, wrapt in a cloak, pacing solidly and, I thought, happily among the shrubberies, stopping every now and then to watch the fiery light and to breathe the invigorating air—and I felt then that, whatever he might be doing, he at all events *was* something, in a sense which applied to but few people I knew. He was not hard, unimaginative, fenced in by stupidity and self-righteousness from unhappiness and doubt, as were some of the men accounted successful whom I knew. No, it was something positive, some self-created light, some stirring of hidden force, that emanated from him, such as I had never encountered before.

VII

THE MEN

I CAN attempt no sort of chronicle of our days, which indeed were quiet and simple enough. I have only preserved in my diary the record of a few scenes and talks and incidents. I will, however, first indicate how our party, as I knew it, was constituted, so that the record may be intelligible.

First of us came Leonard Barthrop, who was, partly by his seniority and partly by his temperament, a sort of second-in-command in the house, much consulted and trusted by Father Payne. He was a man of about thirty-five, grave, humorous, pleasant. If one was in a minor difficulty, too trivial to take to Father Payne, it was natural to consult Barthrop; and he sometimes, too, would say a word of warning to a man, if a storm seemed to be brewing. It must not be denied that men occasionally got on Father Payne's nerves, quite unconsciously, through tactlessness or stupid mannerisms—and Barthrop was able to smoothe the situation out by a word in season. He had a power of doing this without giving offence, from the obvious goodwill which permeated all he did. Barthrop was not very sociable or talkative, and he was occupied, I think, in some sort of historical research—I believe he has since made his name as a judicious and interesting historian; but I knew little of what he was doing, and indeed was hardly intimate with him, though always at ease in his company. He was not a man with strong pre-

ferences or prejudices, nor was he in any sense a brilliant or suggestive writer. I think he had merged himself very much in the life of our little society, and kept things together more than I was at first aware.

Then came Kaye, one of the least conspicuous of the whole group, though he has since become perhaps the best known, by his poems and his beautiful critical studies in both art and literature. Kaye is known as one of those rare figures in literature, a creative critic. His rich and elaborate style, his exquisite side-lights, his poetical faculty of interpretation, make his work famous, though hardly popular. But I found that he worked very slowly and even painfully, deliberately secreting his honey, and depositing it cell by cell. He had a peculiar intimacy with Father Payne, who treated him with a marked respect. Kaye was by far the most absorbed of the party, went and came like a great moth, was the first to disappear, and generally the last to arrive. Neither did he make any attempt at friendship. He was a handsome and graceful fellow, now about thirty, with a worn sort of beauty in his striking features, curling hair, long languid frame, and fine hands. His hands, I used to think, were the most eloquent things about him, and he was ever making silent little gestures with them, as though they were accompanying unuttered trains of thought; but he had, too, a strained and impatient air, as if he found the pursuit of phrases a wearing and hazardous occupation. I used to feel Kaye the most attractive and impressive of our society; but he neither made nor noticed any signals of goodwill, though always courteous and kindly.

Pollard was a totally different man: he was about twenty-eight; and he was writing some work of fiction. He was a small, sturdy, rubicund creature, with beady eyes and pink cheeks, cherubic in aspect, entirely good-natured and lively, full of not very exalted humour, and with a tendency to wild and even hysterical giggling. I used to think that Father Payne did not like him very much; but he was a quick and regular worker, and it was impossible to find fault with him. He was extremely sociable and appreciative, and I used to find his company a relief from the strain which at times made itself felt. Pollard had a way of getting involved in absurd adventures, which he related with immense gusto; and he had a really wonderful power of description—more so in conversation than in writing—and of humorous exaggeration, which made him a delightful companion. But he was never able to put the best of himself into his books, which tended to be sentimental and even conventional.

Then there was Lestrange; and I think he was the least congenial of the lot. He was a handsome, rather clerical-looking man of about twenty-eight, who had been brought up to take Orders, and had decided against doing so. He was very much in earnest, in rather a tiresome way, and his phrases were conventional and pietistic. I used to feel that he jarred a good deal on Father Payne, but much was forgiven him because of his musical talents, which were really remarkable. His organ-playing, with its verve, its delicacy, and its quiet mastery, was delicious to hear. He was engaged in writing music mainly, and had a piano all to

himself in a little remote room beyond the dining-room, which looked out to the stable-yard and had formerly been an estate-office. We used to hear faint sounds wafted down the garden when the wind was in the west. He was friendly, but he had the absorption of the musician in his art, which is unlike all other artistic absorptions, because it seems literally to check the growth of other qualities and interests. In fact, in many ways Lestrange was like a pious child. He was apt to be snubbed by Father Payne, but he was wholly indifferent to all irony. I used to listen to him playing the organ in the evenings, and a language of emotions and visions certainly streamed from his fingers which he was never able to put into words. Father Payne treated him as one might treat an inspired fool, with a mixture of respect and sharpness.

Then there was Rose, a man of twenty-five, a curious mixture of knowledge, cynicism, energy, and affectionateness. I found Rose a very congenial companion, though I never felt sure what he thought, and never aired my enthusiasms in his presence. He had great aplomb, and was troubled by no shyness nor hesitation. There was a touch of frostiness at times between him and Father Payne. Rose was paradoxical and whimsical, and was apt to support fantastic positions with apparent earnestness. But he was an extremely capable and sensible man, and had a knack of dropping his contentiousness the moment it began to give offence. He was by far the most mundane of us, and had some command of money. I used to fancy that Father Payne was a little afraid of him, when he

displayed his very considerable knowledge of the world. His father was a wealthy man, a member of Parliament, and Rose really knew social personages of the day. I doubt if he was ever quite in sympathy with the idea of the place, but I used to feel that his presence was a wholesome sort of corrective, like the vinegar in the salad. I believe he was writing a play, but he has done nothing since in literature, and was in many ways more like a visitor than an inmate.

Then came my friend Vincent, a solid, good-natured, hard-working man, with a real enthusiasm for literature, not very critical or even imaginative, but with a faculty for clear and careful writing. He was at work on a realistic novel, which made some little reputation; but he has become since, what I think he always was meant to be, an able journalist and an excellent leader-writer on political and social topics. Vincent was the most interested of all of us in current affairs, but at the same time had a quiet sort of enthusiasm, and a power of idealising people, ardently but unsentimentally, which made him the most loyal of friends.

The only other person of whom we saw anything was the Vicar of the parish—a safe, decorous, useful man, a distant cousin of Father Payne's. His wife was a good-humoured and conventional woman. Their two daughters were pleasant, unaffected girls, just come to womanhood. Lestrange afterwards married one of them.

We were not much troubled by sociabilities. The place was rather isolated, and Father Payne had the reputation of being something of an eccentric. Moreover, the big neighbouring domain, Whitbury

Park, blocked all access to north and west. The owner was an old and invalid peer, who lived a very secluded life and entertained no one. To the south there was nothing for miles but farms and hamlets, while the only near neighbour in the east was a hunting squire, who thought Father Payne kept a sort of boarding-house, and ignored him entirely. The result was that callers were absolutely unknown, and the wildest form of dissipation was that Pollard and Rose occasionally played lawn-tennis at neighbouring vicarages.

We were not often all there together, because Father Payne's scheme of travel was strictly adhered to. He considered it a very integral part of our life. I never quite knew what his plan was; but he would send a man off, generally alone, with a solid sum for travelling expenses. Thus Lestrange was sent for a month to Berlin when Joachim held court there, or to Dresden and Munich. I remember Pollard and Vincent being packed off to Switzerland together to climb mountains, with stern injunctions to be sociable. Rose went to Spain, to Paris, to St. Petersburg. Kaye went more than once to Italy; but we often went to different parts of England, and then we were generally allowed to go together; but Father Payne's theory was that we should travel alone, learn to pick up friends, and to fend for ourselves. He had acquaintances in several parts of the Continent, and we were generally provided with a letter of introduction to some one. We had a fortnight in June and a fortnight at Christmas to go home—so that we were always away for three months in the year, while Father Payne was apt to send us

off for a week at a time, if he thought we needed a change. Barthrop, I think, made his own plans, and it was all reasonable enough, as Father Payne would always listen to objections. Some of us paid for ourselves on those tours, but he was always willing to supplement it generously.

It used to be a puzzle to me how Father Payne had the command of so much money; his estate was not large; but in the first place he spent very little on himself, and our life was extremely simple. Moreover, I became aware that some of his former pupils and friends used to send him money at times for this express purpose.

The staff consisted of the old butler, whose wife was cook. There were three other maid-servants; the gardener was also coachman. The house was certainly clean and well-kept; we looked after ourselves to a great extent; but there was never any apparent lack of money, though, on the other hand, there was every sign of careful economy. Father Payne never talked about money. "It's an interesting thing, money," I have heard him say, "and it's curious to see how people handle it—but we must not do it too much honour, and it isn't a thing that can be spoken of in general conversation."

VIII

THE METHOD

I DO not propose to make any history of events, or to say how, within a very short time, I fell into the life of the place. I will only say what were the

features of the scheme, and how the rule, such as it was, worked out.

First of all, and above all, came the personality of Father Payne, which permeated and sustained the whole affair. It was not that he made it his business to drive us along. It was not a case of "the guiding hand in front and the propelling foot behind." He seldom interfered, and sometimes for a considerable space one would have no very direct contact with him. He was a man who was always intent, but by no means always intent on shepherding. I should find it hard to say how he spent his time. He was sometimes to all appearances entirely indolent and good-natured, when he would stroll about, talk to the people in the village, and look after the little farm which he kept in his own hands under a bailiff. At another time he would be for long together in an abstracted mood, silent, absent-minded, pursuing some train of thought. At another time he would be very busy with what we were doing, and hold long interviews with us, making us read our work to him and giving us detailed criticisms. On these occasions he was extremely stimulating, for the simple reason that he always seemed to grasp what it was that one was aiming at, and his criticisms were all directed to the question of how far the original conception was being worked out. He did not, as a rule, point out a different conception, or indicate how the work could be done on other lines. He always grasped the plan and intention, and really seemed to be inside the mind of the contriver. He would say: "I think the scheme is weak here—and you can't make a weak place strong by filling it with details,

however good in themselves. That is like trying to mend the Slough of Despond with cartloads of texts. The thing is not to fall in, or, if you fall in, to get out." His three divisions of a subject were "what you say, what you wanted to say, what you ought to have wanted to say." Sometimes he would listen in silence, and then say: "I can't criticise that—it is all off the lines. You had better destroy it and begin again." Or he would say: "You had better revise that and polish it up. It won't be any good when it is done—these patched-up things never are; but it will be good practice." He was encouraging, because he never overlooked the good points of any piece of writing. He would say: "The detail is good, but it is all too big for its place, quite out of scale; it is like a huge ear on a small head." Or he would say: "Those are all things worth saying and well said, but they are much too diffuse." He used to tell me that I was apt to stop the carriage when I was bound on a rapid transit, and go for a saunter among fields. "I don't object to your sauntering, but you must *intend* to saunter—you must not be attracted by a pleasant footpath." Sometimes he could be severe. "That's vulgar," he once said to me, "and you can't make it attractive by throwing scent about." Or he would say: "That's a platitude—which means that it may be worth thinking and feeling, but not worth saying. You can depend upon your reader feeling it without your help." Or he would say: "You don't understand that point. It is a case of the blind leading the blind. Cut the whole passage, and think it out again." Or he would say: "That is all too compressed.

You began by walking, and now you are jumping." Or he would say: "There is a note of personal irritation about that; it sounds as if you had been reading an unpleasant review. It is like the complaint of the nightingale leaning her breast against a thorn in order to get the sensation of pain. You seem to be wiping your eyes all through—you have not got far enough away from your vexation. Your attempt to give it a humorous turn reminds me of Miss Squeers' titter—you must never titter!" Once or twice in early times I used to ask him how *he* would do it. "Don't ask me!" he said. "I haven't got to do it—that's your business; it's no use your doing it in *my* way; all I know is that you are not doing it in *your* way." He was very quick at noticing any mannerisms or favourite words. "All good writers have mannerisms, of course," he would say, "but the moment that the reader sees that it is a mannerism the charm is gone." His praise was rarely given, and when it came it was generous and rich. "That is excellent," I can hear him say. "You have filled your space exactly, and filled it well. There is not a word to add or to take away." He was always prepared to listen to argument or defence. "Very well—read it again." Then, at the end, he would say: "Yes, there is something in that. You meant to anticipate? I don't mind that! But you have anticipated too much, made it too clear; it should just be a hint, no more, which will be explained later. Don't blurt! You have taken the wind out of your sails by explaining it too fully."

Sometimes he would leave us alone for two or three weeks together, and then say frankly that

one had been wasting time, or the reverse. "You must not depend upon me too much; you must learn to walk alone."

Every week we had a meeting, at which some one read a fragment aloud. At these meetings he criticised little himself, but devoted his attention to our criticisms. He would not allow harshness or abruptness in what we said. "We don't want your conclusions or your impressions—we want your reasons." Or he would say: "That is a fair criticism, but unsympathetic. It is in the spirit of a reviewer who wants to smash a man. We don't want Stephen to be stoned here, we want him confuted." I remember once how he said with indignation: "That is simply throwing a rotten egg! And its maturity shows that it was kept for that purpose! You are not criticising, you are only paying off an old score!"

But I think that the two ways in which he most impressed himself were by his conversation, when we were all together, and by his *tête-à-tête* talks, if one happened to be his companion. When we were all together he was humorous, ironical, frank. He did not mind what was said to him, so long as it was courteously phrased; but I have heard him say: "We must remember we are fencing—we must not use bludgeons." Or: "You must not talk as if you were scaring birds away—we are all equal here." He was very unguarded himself in what he said, and always maintained that talkers ought to contribute their own impressions freely and easily. He used to quote with much approval Dr. Johnson's remark about his garrulous old school-fellow, Edwards. Boswell said, when Edwards had gone, that

he thought him a weak man. "Why, yes, sir," said Johnson. "Here is a man who has passed through life without experiences; yet I would rather have him with me than a more sensible man who will not talk readily. This man is always willing to say what he has to say." Father Payne used to add: "The point is to talk; you must not consider your reputation; say whatever comes into your head, and when you have learnt to talk, you can begin to select." I have heard him say: "Go on, some one! It is everybody's business here to avoid a pause. Don't be sticky! Pauses are for a *tête-à-tête.*" Or, again, I have heard him say: "You mustn't examine witnesses here! You should never ask more than three questions running." He did not by any means keep his own rules; but he would apologise sometimes for his shortcomings. "I'm hopeless to-day. I can't attend, I can't think of anything in particular. I'm diluted, I'm weltering—I'm coming down like a shower."

The result of this certainly was that we most of us did learn to talk. He liked to thrash a subject out, but he hated too protracted a discussion. "Here, we've had enough of this. It's very important, but I'm getting bored. I feel priggish. Help, help!"

On the other hand, he was even more delightful in a *tête-à-tête.* He would say profound and tender things, let his emotions escape him. He had with me, and I expect with others, a sort of indulgent and paternal way with him. He never forgot a confidence, and he used to listen delightedly to stories of one's home circle. "Tell me some stories about Aunt Jane," he would say to me.

"There is something impotently fiery about that good lady that I like. Tell me again what she said when she found cousin Frank in a smoking-cap reading Thomas-à-Kempis." He had a way of quoting one's own stories which was subtly flattering, and he liked sidelights of a good-natured kind on the character of other members. "Why won't he say such things to me?" he used to say. "He thinks I should respect him less, when really I should admire him more. He won't let me see when his box is empty! I suspect him of reading Bartlett's *Familiar Quotations* before he goes a walk with me!" Or he would say: "In a general talk you must think about your companions; in a *tête-à-tête* you must only feel him."

But the most striking thing about Father Payne was this. Though we were all very conscious of his influence, and indeed of his authority; though we knew that he meant to have his own way, and was quite prepared to speak frankly and act decisively, we were never conscious of being watched or censured or interfered with. In ninety-nine cases out of a hundred it was a pure pleasure to meet him and to be with him, and many a time have I seen him, in a moment of leisure, strolling in the garden, and hurried out just on the chance of getting a word or a smile, or, if he was in an expansive mood, having my arm taken by him for a little turn. In the hundredth case, it happened that one might have said or done something which one knew that he would disapprove. But, as he never stored things up or kept you waiting, you could be sure he would speak soon or not at all. Often, too, he would just say: "I don't think that your

remark to Kaye gave a fair impression of yourself," or, "Why waste your powder as you did to-night?" I was only once or twice directly rebuked by him, and that was for a prolonged neglect. "You don't *care*," he once said to me emphatically. "I can't do anything for you if you don't care!" But he was the most entirely placable of men. A word of regret or apology, and he would say: "Don't give it another thought, my boy," or, "That's all right, then."

The real secret of his influence was that he took not a critical or even a dispassionate view of each of us, but an enthusiastic view. He took no pleasure in our shortcomings; they were rather of the nature of an active personal disappointment. The result was simply that you were natural with him, but natural with the added sense that he liked you and thought well of you, and expected friendship and even brilliance from you. You felt that he knew you well, and recognised your faults and weaknesses, but that he knew your best side even better, and enjoyed the presence of it. I never knew anyone who was so appreciative, and though I said foolish things to him sometimes, I felt that he was glad that I should be my undisguised self. It was thus delicately flattering to be with him, and it gave confidence and self-respect. That was the basis of our whole life, the goodwill and affection of Father Payne, and the desire to please him.

IX

FATHER PAYNE

FATHER PAYNE was a big solid man, as I have said, but he contrived to give the impression of being even bigger than he was. It was like the Irish estate, of which its owner said that it had more land to the acre than any place he knew. This was the result, I suppose, of what Barthrop once dryly called the "effortless expansion" of Father Payne's personality. I suppose he was about six-foot-two in height, and he must have weighed fifteen stone or even more. He was not stout, but all his limbs were solid, so that he filled his clothes. His hands were big, his feet were big. He wore a rather full beard: he was slightly bald when I knew him, but his hair grew rather long and curly. He always wore old clothes—but you were never conscious of what he wore: he never looked, as some people do, like a suit of clothes with a person inside them. Thinking it over, it seems to me that the reason why you noticed his clothes so little, when you were with him, was because you were always observing his face, or his hands, which were extremely characteristic of him, or his motions, which had a lounging sort of grace about them. Heavy men are apt on occasions to look lumbering, but Father Payne never looked that. His whole body was under his full control. When he walked, he swung easily along; when he moved, he moved impetuously and eagerly. But his face was the most remarkable thing about him. It had no great

distinction of feature, and it was sanguine, often sunburnt, in hue. But, solid as it was, it was all alive. His big dark eyes were brimful of amusement and kindliness, and it was like coming into a warm room on a cold day to have his friendly glance directed upon you. As he talked, his eyebrows moved swiftly, and he had a look, with his eyes half-closed and his brows drawn up, as he waited for an answer, of what the old books call "quizzical"— a sort of half-caressing irony, which was very attractive. He had an impatient little frown which passed over his face, like a ruffle of wind, if things went too slowly or heavily for his taste; and he had, too, on occasions a deep, abstracted look, as if he were following a thought far. There was also another look, well known to his companions, when he turned his eyes upwards with a sort of resignation, generally accompanied by a deprecating gesture of the hand. Altogether it was a most expressive face, because, except in his abstracted mood, he always seemed to be entirely *there*, not concealing or repressing anything, but bending his whole mind upon what was being said. Moreover, if you said anything personal or intimate to him, a word of gratitude or pleasure, he had a quick, beautiful, affectionate look, so rewarding, so embracing that I often tried to evoke it—though an attempt to evoke it deliberately often produced no more than a half-smile, accompanied by a little wink, as if he saw through the attempt.

His great soft white hands, always spotlessly clean—he was the cleanest-looking man I ever saw—were really rather extraordinary. They looked at first sight clumsy, and even limp; but he was un-

usually deft and adroit with his fingers, and his touch on plants, in gardening, his tying of strings—he liked doing up parcels—was very quick and delicate. He was fond of all sorts of little puzzles, toys of wood and metal, which had to be fitted together; and the puzzles took shape or fell to pieces under his fingers like magic. They were extremely sensitive to pain, his hands, and a little pinch or abrasion would cause him marked discomfort. His handwriting was rapid and fine, and he occasionally would draw a tiny sketch to illustrate something, which showed much artistic skill. He often deplored his ignorance of handicraft, which he said would have been a great relief to him.

His voice, again, was remarkable. It was not in ordinary talk either deep or profound, though it could and did become both on occasions, especially when he made a quotation, which he did with some solemnity. I used at first to think that there was a touch of rhetorical affectation about his quotations. They were made in a high musical tone, and as often as not ended with the tears coming into his eyes. He spoke to me once about this. He said that it was a mistake to think he was *deeply* affected by a quotation. "In fact," he said, "I am not easily affected by passionate or tragic emotion—what does affect me is a peculiar touch of beauty, but it is a luxurious and superficial thing. It would entirely prevent me," he added, "from reading many poems or prose passages aloud which I greatly admire. I simply could not command myself! In fact," he went on, smiling, "I very often can only get to the end of a quotation

by fixing my mind on something else. I add up the digits giving the number of the page, or I count the plates at the dinner-table. It's very absurd—but it takes me in just the same way when I am alone. I could not read the last chapter of the Book of Revelation aloud to myself, or the chapter on 'The Wilderness' in Isaiah, without shedding tears. But it doesn't mean anything; it is just the *hysterica passio*, you know!"

His voice, when he first joined in a talk, was often low and even hesitating; but when he became interested and absorbed, it gathered volume and emphasis. Barthrop once said to me that Father Payne was the only person he knew who always talked in italics. But he very seldom harangued, though it is difficult to make that clear in recording his talks, because he often spoke continuously. Yet it was never a soliloquy: he always included the listeners. He used to look round at them, explore their faces, catch an eye and smile, indicate the particular person addressed by a darted-out finger; and he had many little free gestures with his hands as he talked. He would trace little hieroglyphics with his finger, as if he were writing a word, sweep an argument aside, bring his hands together as though he were shaping something. This was a little confusing at first, and used to divert my attention, because of the great mobility of his hands; but after a little it seemed to me to bring out and illustrate his points in a remarkably salient way.

His habits were curious and a little mysterious. They were by no means regular. Sometimes for days together we hardly saw him. He often rose

early and walked in the garden. If he found a book which interested him, he would read it with absorbed attention, quite unconscious of the flight of time. "I do love getting really *buried* in a book," he would say; "it's the best of tests." Sometimes he wrote, sometimes he composed music, sometimes he would have his table covered with bits of paper full of unintelligible designs and patterns. He did not mind being questioned, but he would not satisfy one's curiosity. "It's only some nonsense of mine," he would say. He did not write many letters, and they were generally short. At times he would be very busy on his farm, at times occupied in the village, at times he took long walks alone; very occasionally he went away for a day or two. He was both uncommunicative and communicative. He would often talk with the utmost frankness and abandon about his private affairs; but, on the other hand, I always had the sense of much that was hidden in his life. And I have no doubt that he spent much time in prayer and meditation. He seldom spoke of this, but it played a large part in his life. He gave the impression of great ease, cheerfulness, and tranquillity, attained by some deliberate resolve, because he was both restless and sensitive, took sorrows and troubles hardly, and was deeply shocked and distressed by sad news of any kind. I have heard him say that he often had great difficulty in forcing himself to open a letter which he thought likely to be distressing or unpleasant. He was naturally, I imagine, of an almost neurotic tendency; but he did not seem so much to combat this by occupation and determination as to have arrived at some mechanical way of

dealing with it. I remember that he said to me once: "If you have a bad business on hand, an unhappy or wounding affair, it is best to receive it fully and quietly. Let it do its worst, realise it, take it in—don't resist it, don't try to distract your mind: see the full misery of it, don't attempt to minimise it. If you do that, you will suddenly find something within you come to your rescue and say, 'Well, I can bear that!' and then it is all right. But if you try to dodge it, it's my experience that there comes a kind of back-wash which hurts very much indeed. Let the stream go over you, and then emerge. To fight against it simply prolongs the agony." He certainly recovered himself quicker than anyone I have ever known: indeed I think his recuperation was the best sign of his enormous vitality. "I'm sensitive," he said to me once, "but I'm tough—I have a fearful power of forgetting—it's much better than forgiving." But the thing which remains most strongly in my mind about him is the way in which he pervaded the whole place. It was fancy, perhaps, but I used to think I knew whether he was in the house or not. Certainly, if I wanted to speak to him, I used to go off to his study on occasions, quite sure that I should find him; while on other occasions—and I more than once put this to the test—I have thought to myself, "It's no use going—the Father is out." His presence at any sort of gathering was entirely unmistakable. It was not that you felt hampered or controlled: it was more like the flowing of some clear stream. When he was away, the thing seemed tame and spiritless; when he was there, it was all full of life. But his presence was not, at least to

me, at all wearisome or straining. I have known men of great vitality who were undeniably fatiguing, because they overcame one like a whirlwind. But with Father Payne it always seemed as though he put wind into one's sails, but left one to steer one's own course. He did not thwart or deflect, or even direct: he simply multiplied one's own energy. I never had the sensation with him of suppressing any thought in my mind, or of saying to myself, "The Father won't care about that." He always did care, and I used to feel that he was glad to be inquired of, glad to have his own thoughts diverted, glad to be of use. He never nagged, or found petty fault, or "chivied" you, as the boys say. If you asked him a question, or asked him to stroll or walk, you always felt that he was delighted, that it was the one thing he enjoyed. He liked to have childish secrets. He and I had several little *caches* in the holes of trees, or the chinks of buildings, where we concealed small coins or curious stones on our walks, and at a later date revisited them. We were frankly silly about certain things. He and I had some imaginary personages—Dr. Waddilove, supposed to be a rich beneficed clergyman of Tory views; Mr. McTurk, a matter-of-fact Scotsman; Henry Bland, a retired schoolmaster with copious stores of information; and others—and we used often to discourse in character. But he always knew when to stop. He would say to me suddenly: "Dr. Waddilove said to me yesterday that he never argued with atheists or radicals, because they always came round in the end." Or he would say, in Henry Bland's flute-like tones: "Your mention of Robert Browning induces me to relate an anec-

dote, which I think may prove not wholly uninteresting to you." At times we used to tell long stories on our walks, stopping short in the middle of a sentence, when the other had instantly to continue the narrative. I do not mean that the wit was very choice or the humour at all remarkable—it would not bear being written down—but it amused us both. "Come, what shall we do to-day?" I can hear him say. "Dr. Waddilove and Mr. Bland might have a walk and discuss the signs of the times?" And then the ridiculous dialogue would begin.

That was the delightful thing about him, that he was always ready to fall in with a mood, always light of touch and gay. He could be tender and sympathetic, as well as incisive and sensible if it was needed; but he was never either contradictory or severe or improving. He would sometimes pull himself up and say: "Here, we must be businesslike," but he was never reproachful or grieved or shocked by what we said to him. He could be decisive, stern, abrupt, if it was really needed. But his most pungent reproofs were inflicted by a blank silence, which was one of the most appalling things to encounter. He generally began to speak again a few moments later, on a totally different subject, while any such sign of displeasure was extremely rare. He never under any circumstances reminded anyone of his generosity, or the trouble he had taken, or the favours he had conferred, while he would often remind one of some trifling kindness done to him. "I often remember how good you were about those accounts, old boy! I should never have got through without you!"

His demeanour was generally that of an indulgent uncle, with that particular touch of nearness which in England is apt to exist only among relations. He would consult us about his own private worries with entire frankness, and this more than anything made us ready to confide in him. He used to hand us cheques or money if required, with a little wink. "That's your screw!" he used to say; and he liked any thanks that seemed natural.

"Natural,"—that is the word that comes before me all through. I can remember no one so unembarrassed, so easy, so transparent. His thought flowed into his talk; and his silences were not reticences, but the busy silence of the child who has "a plan." He gave himself away without economy and without disguise, and he accepted gratefully and simply whatever you cared to give him of thought or love. I think oftenest of how I sometimes went to see him in the evenings: if he was busy, as he often was, he used just to murmur half to himself, "Well, old man?" indicate a chair, put his finger on his lips, and go on with his work or his book; but at intervals he would just glance at me with a little smile, and I knew that he was glad to have me at hand in that simple companionship when there is no need of speech or explanation. And then the book or paper would be dropped, and he would say: "Well, out with it." If one said, "Nothing—only company," he would give one of his best and sweetest smiles.

X

CHARACTERISTICS

BUT whatever may have been Father Payne's effect upon us individually or collectively, or however the result may have been achieved, there was no question of one thing, and that was the ardent and beautiful happiness of the place. Joy deliberately schemed for and planned is apt to evaporate. But we were not hunting for happiness as men dig for gold. We were looking for something quite different. We were all doing work for which we cared, with kind and yet incisive criticism to help us; and then the simplicity and regularity of the life, the total absence of all indulgence, the exercise, the companionship, the discipline, all generated a kind of high spirits that I have known in no other place and at no other time. I used to awake in the morning fresh and alert, free from all anxiety, all sense of tiresome engagements, all possibility of boredom. All staleness, weariness, all complications and conventional duties, all jealousies and envyings, were absent. We were not competing with each other, we were not bent on asserting ourselves, we had just each our own bit of work to do; moreover our spaces of travel had an invigorating effect, and sent us back to Aveley with the zest of returning to a beloved home. Of course there were little bickerings at times, little complexities of friendship; but these never came to anything in Father Payne's kindly presence. Sometimes a man would get fretful or worried over his work; if so, he was

generally despatched on a brief holiday, with an injunction to do no work at all; and I am sure that the prospect of even temporary banishment was the strongest of all motives for the suppression of strife. I remember spring mornings, when the birds began to sing in the shrubberies, and the beds were full of rising flower-blades, when one's whole mind and heart used to expand in an ecstasy of hope and delight; I remember long rambles or bicycle rides far into the quiet pastoral country, in the summer heat, alone or with a single companion, when life seemed almost too delicious to continue; then there would be the return, and a plunge into the bathing-pool, and another quiet hour or two at the work in hand, and the delight of feeling that one was gaining skill and ease of expression; or again there would be the quick tramp in winter along muddy roads, with the ragged clouds hurrying across the sky, with the prospect ahead of a fire-lit evening of study and talk; and best of all a walk and a conversation with Father Payne himself, when all that he said seemed to interpret life afresh and to put it in a new and exciting aspect. I never met anyone with such a power of linking the loose ends of life together, and of giving one so joyful a sense of connection and continuance. How it was done I cannot guess; but whereas other minds could cast light upon problems, Father Payne somehow made light shine through them, and gave them a soft translucence. But while he managed to give one a great love of life itself, it never rested there; he made me feel engaged in some sort of eternal business, and though he used no conventional expressions, I had

in his presence a sense of vast horizons and shining tracks passing into an infinite distance full of glory and sweetness, and of death itself as a mystery of surprise and wonder. He taught me to look for beauty and harmony, not to waste time in mean controversy or in futile regret, but to be always moving forwards, and welcoming every sign of confidence and goodwill. He had a way, too, of making one realise the dignity and necessity of work, without cherishing any self-absorbed illusions about its impressiveness or its importance. His creed was the recognition of all beauty and vividness as an unquestionable sign of the presence of God, the Power that made for order and health and strength and peace; and the deep necessity of growing to understand one another with unsuspicious trustfulness and sympathy—the Fatherhood of God, and the Brotherhood of Man, these were the doctrines by which he lived.

It used to be an extraordinary pleasure to me to accompany him about the village; he knew every one, and could talk with a simple directness and a quiet humour that was inimitable. I never saw so naturally pastoral a man. He carried good-temper about with him, and yet he could rebuke with a sharpness which surprised me, if there was need. He was curiously tolerant, I used to think, of sensual sins, but in the presence of cruelty or meanness or deliberate deceit he used to explode into the most violent language. I remember a scene which it is almost a terror to me now to recollect, when I was walking with him, and we met a tipsy farmer of a neighbouring village flogging his horse along a lane. He ran up beside the cart,

he stopped the horse, he roared at the farmer, "Get out of your cart, you d—d brute, and lead it home." The farmer descended in a state of stupefaction. Father Payne snatched the whip out of his hand, broke it, threw it over the hedge, threatened him with all the terrors of the law, and reduced him to a state of abject submission. Presently he recovered somewhat, and in drunken wrath began to abuse Father Payne. "Very well," said Father Payne, "you can take your choice: either you lead the horse home quietly, and I'll see it done; or else I come with you to the village, and tell the people what I think of you in the open street. And if you put up your fist like that again, I'll run you home myself and hand you over to the policeman. I'll be d—d if I won't do it now. Here, Duncan," he said to me, "you go and fetch the policeman, and we'll have a little procession back." The ruffian thought better of it, and led the horse away muttering, while we walked behind until we were near the farm. "Now get in, and behave yourself," said Father Payne. "And if you choose to come over to-morrow and beg my pardon, you may; and if you don't, I'll have you up before the magistrates on Saturday next."

I had never seen such wrath; but the tempest subsided instantly, and he walked back with me in high good-humour. The next day the man came over, and Father Payne said to me in the evening: "We had quite an affecting scene. I gave him a bit of my mind, and he thanked me for speaking straight. He's a low brute, but I don't think he'll do the same sort of thing in a hurry. I'll give him six weeks to get over his fright, and then I'll do a little patrolling!"

His gentleness, on the other hand, with women and children was beautiful to see. It was as natural for Father Payne to hurry to a scene of disaster or grief as it was for others to wish to stay away. He used to speak to a sufferer or a mourner with great directness. "Tell me all about it," he would say, and he would listen with little nods and gestures, raising his eyebrows or even shutting his eyes, saying very little, except a word or two of sympathy at the end. He knew all the children, but he never petted them or made favourites, but treated them with a serious kind of gravity which he assured us they infinitely preferred. He used to have a Christmas entertainment for them at the Hall, as well as a summer feast. He encouraged the boys and young men to botanise and observe nature in all forms, and though he would never allow nests to be taken, or even eggs if he could help it, he would give little prizes for the noting of any rare bird or butterfly. "If you want men to live in the country, they must love the country," he used to say. He kept a village club going, but he never went there. "It's embarrassing," he used to say. "They don't want me strolling in any more than I want them strolling in. Philanthropists have no sense of privacy." He did not call at the villagers' houses, unless there was some special event, and his talks were confined to chance meetings. Neither was there any sense of duty about it. "No one is taken in by formal visiting," he said. "You must just do it if you like it, or else stay away. 'To keep yourself to yourself' is the highest praise these people can give. No one likes a fuss!"

The same sort of principles regulated our own intercourse. "We are not monks," he used to say; "we are Carthusians, hermits, living together for comfort or convenience." The solitude and privacy of everyone was respected. We used to do our talking when we took exercise; but there was very little sitting and gossiping together *tête-à-tête*. "I don't want everyone to try to be intimate with everyone else," he used to say. "The point is just to get on amicably together; we won't have any cliques or coteries." He himself never came to any of our rooms, but sent a message if he wanted to see us. One small thing he strongly objected to, the shouting up from the garden to anyone's window: "Most offensive!" He disliked all loud shouting and calling or singing aloud. "You mustn't use the world as a private sitting-room." And the one thing which used to fret him was a voice stridently raised. "Don't rouse the echoes!" he would say. "You have no more right to make a row than you have to use a strong scent or to blow a post-horn—that's not liberty!" The result of this was that the house was a singularly quiet one, and this sense of silence and subdued sound lives in my memory as one of its most refreshing characteristics. "A row is only pleasant if it is deliberate and organised," he used to say. "Native woodnotes wild are all very well, but they are not civilisation. To talk audibly and quietly is the best proof of virtue and honour!"

XI

CONVERSATION

I AM going to try to give a few impressions of talks with Father Payne—both public and private talks. It is, however, difficult to do this without giving, perhaps, a wrong impression. I used to get into the habit of jotting down the things he had said, and I improved by practice. But he was a rapid talker and somewhat discursive, and he was often deflected from his main subject by a question or a discussion. Yet I do not want it to be thought that he was fond of monologue and soliloquy. He was not, I should say, a very talkative man; days would sometimes pass without his doing more than just taking a hand in conversation. He liked to follow the flow of a talk, and to contribute a remark now and then; sometimes he was markedly silent; but in no case was he ever oppressive. Occasionally, and more often in *tête-à-tête*, he went ahead and talked copiously, but this was rather the exception than the rule. I have not thought it worth while to try to give the effect of our own talk. We were young, excitable, and argumentative, and, though it was at the time often delightful and stimulating, it was also often very crude and immature. Father Payne was good at helping a talker out, and would often do justice to a clumsily-expressed remark which he thought was interesting. But he was by far the most interesting member of the circle; he spoke easily and flowingly when he was moved, and there always seemed to me a sense of form about his

talk which was absent from ours. But under no circumstance did he ever become tedious—indeed he was extremely sensitive to the smallest signs of impatience. We often tried, so to speak, to draw him out; but if he had the smallest suspicion that he was being drawn, he became instantly silent.

There is more coherence about some of the talks I have recorded than was actually the case. He would diverge to tell a story, or he would call one's attention to some sight or sound.

Moreover his face, his movements, his gestures, all added much to his talk. He had a way of wrinkling up his brows, of shaking his head, of looking round with an awestruck expression, his eyes wide open, his mouth pursed up, especially when he had reached some triumphantly absurd conclusion. He had two little quick gestures of the hands as he spoke, opening his fingers, waving a point aside, emphasizing an argument by a quick downward motion of his forefinger. He had, too, a quick, loud, ebullient laugh, sometimes shrill, sometimes deep; and he abandoned himself to laughter at an absurd story or jest as completely as anyone I have ever seen. Rose was an excellent mimic, and Father Payne used to fall into agonising paroxysms of laughter at many of his representations. But he always said that laughter was with him a social mood, and that he had never any inclination to laugh when he was alone.

So the record of his talks must be taken not as typical of his everyday mood, but as instances of the kind of things he said when he was moved to speak at large; and even so they give, I am aware, too condensed an impression. He never talked as

if he were playing on a party or a companion with a hose-pipe. There was never anyone who was more easily silenced or diverted. But to anyone who knew him they will give, I believe, a true impression of his method of talk; and perhaps they may give to those who never saw him a faint reflection of his lively and animated mind, the energy with which he addressed himself to small problems, and the firm belief which he always maintained, that any evidence of life, however elementary, was more encouraging and inspiring than the most elaborate logic or the profoundest intellectual grasp of abstract subjects.

XII

OF GOING TO CHURCH

I HAD been to church one summer Sunday morning —a very simple affair it was, with nothing sung but a couple of hymns; but the Vicar read beautifully, neither emphatically nor lifelessly, with a little thrill in his voice at times that I liked to hear. It did not compel you to listen so much as invite you to join. Lestrange played the organ most divinely; he generally extemporised before the service, and played a simple piece at the end; but he never strained the resources of the little organ, and it was all simple and formal music, principally Bach or Handel.

Father Payne himself was a regular attendant at church, and Sunday was a decidedly leisurely day. He advised us to put aside our writing work, to write letters, read, make personal jottings, talk, though there was no inquisition into such things.

Father Payne was a somewhat irregular responder, but it was a pleasure to sit near him, because his deep, rapid voice gave a new quality to the words. He seemed happy in church, and prayed with great absorption, though I noticed that his Bible was often open before him all through the service. The Vicar's sermons were good of their kind, suggestive rather than provocative, about very simple matters of conduct rather than belief. I have heard Father Payne speak of them with admiration as never being discursive, and I gathered that the Vicar was a great admirer of Newman's sermons.

We came away together, Father Payne and I, and we strolled a little in the garden. I felt emboldened to ask him the plain question why he went to church. "Oh, for a lot of reasons," he said, "none of them very conclusive! I like to meet my friends in the first place; and then a liturgy has a charm for me. It has a beauty of its own, and I like ceremony. It is not that I think it sacred—only beautiful. But I quite admit the weakness of it, which is simply that it does not appeal to everyone, and I don't think that our Anglican service is an ideal service. It is too refined and formal; and many people would feel it was more religious if it were more extempore—prayer and plain advice."

I told him something of my old childish experience, saying that I used to regard church as a sort of calling-over, and that God would be vexed if one did not appear.

He laughed at this. "Yes, I don't think we can insist on it as being a levée," he said, "where one is expected to come and make one's bow and pay

formal compliments. That idea is an old anthropomorphic one, of course. It is superstitious—it is almost debasing to think of God demanding praise as a duty incumbent on us. 'To thee all angels cry aloud'—I confess I don't like the idea of heaven as a place of cheerful noise—that isn't attractive!

"And also I think that the attention demanded in our service is a mistake—it's a mixture of two ideas; the liturgical ceremony which touches the eye and the emotion, rather than the reason; and the sermon and the prayer in which the reason is supposed to be concerned. I think the Catholic idea is a better one, a solemnity performed, in which you don't take part, but receive impressions. There's no greater strain on the mind than forcing it to follow a rapid and exalted train of intellectual and literary thought and expression. I confess I don't attempt that. It seems to me just a joyful and neighbourly business, where one puts the mind in a certain expectant mood, and is lucky if one carries a single thrill or aspiration away."

"What do you *do*, then?" I said.

"Well, I meditate," said Father Payne. "I believe in meditation very much, and in solitude it is very hard work. But the silent company of friends, and the old arches and woodwork, some simple music, a ceremony, and a little plan of thought going on—that seems to me a fruitful atmosphere. Some verse, some phrase, which I have heard a hundred times before, suddenly seems written in letters of gold. I follow it a little way into the dark, I turn it over, I wonder about it, I enjoy its beauty. I don't say that my thoughts are generally very startling or poignant or profound; but I feel

the sense of the Fatherly, tolerant, indulgent presence of God, and a brotherly affection for my fellow-men. It's a great thing to be in the same place with a number of people, all silent, and on the whole thinking quiet, happy, and contented thoughts. It all brings me into line with my village friends, it gives me a social mood, and I feel for once that we all want the same things from life—and that for once instead of having to work and push for them, we are fed and comforted. 'Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it'—that's a wholesome, childlike verse, you know. The whole thing seems to me a simple device for producing a placid and expectant mood—I don't know anything else that produces it so well."

"You mean it is something mystical—almost hypnotic?" I said.

"Perhaps I should if I knew what those big words meant," said Father Payne, smiling. "No; church seems to me a thing that has really grown up out of human nature, not a thing imposed upon it. I don't like what may be called ecclesiasticism, partly because it emphasizes the intellectual side of belief, partly because it tries to cast a slur on the people who don't like ceremonial, and whom it does not suit—and most of all because ecclesiasticism aims at making you believe that other people can transact spiritual business on your account. In these democratic days, you can't have spiritual authority—you have got to find what people need, and help them to find it for themselves. The plain truth is that we don't want dogma. Of course it isn't to be despised, because it once meant something, even if it does not now. Dogmas are not unintelligible

intellectual propositions imposed on the world. They are explanations, interpretations, attempts to link facts together. They have the sacredness of ideas which people lived by, and for which they were prepared to die. But many of them are scientific in form only, and the substance has gone out of them. We know more in one sense about life and God than we did, but we also know less, because we realise there is so much more to know. But now we want, I believe, two or three great ideas which everyone can understand—like Fatherhood and Brotherhood, like peace and orderliness and beauty. I think that a church service means all these things, or ought to. What people need is simplicity and beauty of life—joy and hope and kindness. Anything which helps these things on is fine; anything which bewilders and puzzles and gives a sense of dreariness is simply injurious. I want to be told to be quiet, to try again, not to be disheartened by failures, not to be angry with other people, to give up things, rather than to get them with a sauce of envy and spite—the feeling of a happy and affectionate family, in fact. The sort of thing I don't want is the Athanasian Creed. I can't regard it simply as a picturesque monument of ancient and ferocious piety. It seems to me an overhanging cloud of menace and mystification! It doesn't hurt the unintelligent Christian, of course—he simply doesn't understand it; but to the moderately intelligent it is like a dog barking furiously which may possibly get loose; a little more intelligence, and it is all right. You know the dog is safely tied up! Again, I don't mind the cursing psalms, because they give the parson the

power of saying: 'We say this to remind ourselves that it was what people used to feel, and which Christ came to change.' I don't mind anything that is human—what I can't tolerate is anything inhuman or unintelligible. No one can misunderstand the Beatitudes; very few people can follow the arguments of St. Paul! You don't want only elaborate reasons for clever people, you want still more beautiful motives for simple people. It isn't perfect, our service, I admit, but it does me good."

"Tell me," I said—"to go back for a moment—something more about meditating—I like that!"

"Well," said Father Payne, "it's like anchoring to a thought. Thought is a fidgety thing, restless, perverse. It anchors itself very easily on to a grievance, or an unpleasant incident, or a squabble. Don't you know the misery of being jerked back, time after time, by an unpleasant thought? I think one ought to practise the opposite—and I know now by experience that it is possible. I will make a confession. I don't care for many of the Old Testament lessons myself. I think there's too much fact, or let us say incident, in them, and not enough poetry. Well, I take up my Bible, and I look at Job, or Isaiah, or the Revelation, and I read quietly on. Suddenly there's a gleam of gold in the bed of the stream—some splendid, deep, fine thought. I follow it out; I think how it has appeared in my own life, or in the lives of other people—it bears me away on its wings. I pray about it, I hope to be more like that—and so on. Sometimes it is a sharp revelation of something ugly and perverse in my own nature—I don't dwell long on that, but I see in imagination how it is

likely to trouble me, and I hope that it will not delude me again; because these evil things delude one, they call noxious tricks by fine names. I say to myself, 'What you pretend is self-respect, or consistency, is really irritable vanity or stupid unimaginativeness.' But it is a mistake, I think, to dwell long on one's deficiencies: what one has got to do is to fill one's life full of positive, active, beautiful things, until there is no room for the ugly intruders. And, to put it shortly, a service makes me think about other people and about God; I fear it doesn't make me contrite or sorrowful. I don't believe in any sort of self-pity, nor do I think one ought to cultivate shame; those things lie close to death, and it is life that I am in search of—fulness of life. Don't let us bemoan ourselves, or think that a sign of grace!"

"But if you find yourself grubby, nasty, suspicious, irritable, isn't it a good thing to rub it in sometimes?" I said.

"No, no," said Father Payne, "life will do that hard enough. Turn your back on it all, look at the beautiful things, leave a thief to catch a thief, and the dead to bury the dead. Don't sniff at the evil thing; go and get a breath of fresh air."

XIII

OF NEWSPAPERS

Father Payne was a very irregular reader of the newspaper; he was not greedy of news, and he was incurious about events, while he disliked the way in which they were professionally dished up

for human consumption. At times, however, he would pore long and earnestly over a daily paper with knitted brows and sighs. "You seem to be suffering a good deal over your paper to-day, Father!" said Barthrop once, regarding him with amusement. Father Payne lifted up his head, and then broke into a smile. "It's all right, my boy! he said. "I don't despair of the world itself, but I feel that if the average newspaper represents the mind of the average man, the human race is very feeble—not worth saving! This sort of thing"—indicating the paper with a wave of his hand—"makes me realise how many things there are that don't interest me—and I can't get at them either through the medium of these writers' minds. They don't seem to want simply to describe the facts, but to manipulate them; they try to make you uncomfortable about the future, and contented with the past. It ought to be just the other way! And then I ask myself, 'Ought I, as a normal human being, to be as one-sided, as submissive, as trivial, as sentimental as this?' These vast summaries of public opinion, do they represent anyone's opinion at all, or are they simply the sort of thing you talk about in a railway-carriage with a man you don't know? Does anyone's mind really dwell on such things and ponder them? The newspapers do not really know what is happening—everything takes them by surprise. The ordinary person is interested in his work, his amusements, the people he lives with—in real things. There seems to be nothing real here; it is all shadowy. I want to get at men's minds, not at what journalists think is in men's minds. The human being in the news-

papers seems to me an utterly unreal person, picturesque, theatrical, fatuous, slobbering, absurd. Does not the newspaper-convention misrepresent us as much as the book-convention misrepresents us? We straggle irregularly along, we are capable of entertaining at the same moment two wholly contrary opinions, we do what we don't intend to do, we don't carry out our hopes or our purposes. The man in the papers is agitated, excited, wild, inquisitive—the ordinary person is calm, indifferent, and on the whole fairly happy, unless some one frightens him. I can't make it out, because it isn't a conspiracy to deceive, and yet it does deceive; and what is more, most people don't even seem to know that they are being misrepresented. It all seems to me to differ as much from real life as the Morning Service read in church differs from the thoughts of the congregation!"

"How would you mend it?" said Barthrop. "It seems to me it must represent *something*."

"Something!" said Father Payne. "I don't know! I don't believe we are so stupid and so ignoble! As to mending it, that's another question. Writing is such a curious thing—it seems to represent anything in the world except the current of a man's thoughts. Reverie—has anyone ever tried to represent that? I have been out for a walk sometimes, and reflected when I came in that if what has passed through my mind were all printed in full in a book, it would make a large octavo volume—and precious stuff, too! Yet the few thoughts which do stand out when it is all over, the few bright flashes, they are things which can hardly be written down—at least they never are written down."

"But what would you do?" I said—"with the newspapers, I mean."

"Well," said Father Payne, "a great deal of the news most worth telling can be told best in pictures. I believe very much in illustrated papers. They really do help the imagination. That's the worst of words—a dozen scratches on a bit of paper do more to make one realise a scene than columns of description. I would do a lot with pictures, and a bit of print below to tell people what to notice. Then we must have a number of bare facts and notices—weather, business, trade, law—the sort of thing that people concerned must read. But I would make a clean sweep of fashion, and all sensational intelligence—murders, accidents, sudden deaths. I would have much more biography of living people as well as dead, and a few of the big speeches. Then I would have really good articles with pictures about foreign countries—we ought to know what the world looks like, and how the other people live. And then I would have one or two really fine little essays every day by the very best people I could get, amusing, serious, beautiful articles about nature and art and books and ideas and qualities—some real, good, plain, wise, fine, simple thinking. You want to get people in touch with the best minds!"

"And how many people would read such a paper?" I said.

"Oh, I don't know, I'm sure," said Father Payne with a groan. "I would for one! I want to have the feeling of being in touch day by day with the clever, interesting, lively, active-minded people, as if I had been listening to good talk. Isn't that

possible? Instead of which I sit here, day after day, overflowing with my own ridiculous thoughts—and the world discharging all its staleness and stupidity like a sewer in these horrible documents. Take it away from me, someone! I'm fascinated by the disgusting smell of it!" I withdrew the paper from under his hands. "Thank you," said Father Payne feebly. "That's the horror of it—that the world isn't a dull place or a sensational place or a nasty place—and these papers make me feel it is all three!"

"I'm sorry you are so low about it," said Barthrop.

"Yes, because journalism ought to be the finest thing in the world," said Father Payne. "Just imagine! The power of talking, without any of the inconveniences of personality, to half-a-million people."

"But why doesn't it improve?" said Barthrop. "You always say that the public finds out what it wants, and will have it."

"In books, yes!" said Father Payne; "but in daily life we are all so damnably afraid of the truth—that's what is the matter with us, and it is that which journalism caters for. Suppress the truth, pepper it up, flavour it, make it appetising—try to persuade people that the world is romantic!—that's the aim of the journalist. He flies from the truth, he makes a foolish tale out of it, he makes people despise the real interests of life, he makes us all want to escape from life into something that never has been and never will be. I loathe romance with all my heart. The way of escape is within, and not without."

"You had better go for a walk," said Barthrop soothingly.

"I must," said Father Payne. "I'm drunk and drugged with unreality. I will go and have a look round the farm—no, I won't have any company, thank you. I shall only go on fuming and stewing, if I have sympathetic listeners. You are too amiable, you fellows. You encourage me to talk, when you ought to stop your ears and run from me." And Father Payne swung out of the room.

XIV

OF HATE

It was at dinner, one frosty winter evening, and we were all in good spirits. Two or three animated conversations were going on at the table. Father Payne was telling one of his dreams to the three who were nearest to him, and, funny as most of his dreams were, this was unusually so. There was a burst of laughter and a silence—a sudden sharp silence, in which Vincent, who was continuing a conversation, was heard to say to Barthrop, in a tone of fierce vindictiveness, "I hate him like the devil!" Another laugh followed, and Vincent blushed. "Perhaps I ought not to say that?" he said in hurried tones.

"You are quite right," said Father Payne to Vincent, encouragingly—"at least you may be quite right. I don't know of whom you were speaking."

"Yes, who is it, Vincent?" said someone, leaning forwards.

"No, no," said Father Payne, "that's not fair! It was meant to be a private confession."

"But you don't hate people, Father?" said Lestrange, looking rather pained.

"I, dear man?" said Father Payne. "Yes, of course I do! I loathe them! Where are your eyes and ears? All decent people do. How would the world get on without it?"

Lestrange looked rather shocked. "I don't understand," he said. "I always gathered that you thought it our business to—well, to love people."

"Our business, yes!" said Father Payne; "but our pleasure, no! One must begin by hating people. What is there to like about many of us?"

"Why, Father," said Vincent, "you are the most charitable of men!"

Father Payne gave him a little bow. "Come," he said, "I will make a confession. I am by nature the most suspicious of mankind. I have all the uncivilised instincts. There are people of whom I hate the sight and the sound, and even the scent. My natural impulse is to see the worst points of everyone. I admit that people generally improve upon acquaintance, but I have no weak sentiment about my fellow-men—they are often ugly, stupid, ill-mannered, ill-tempered, unpleasant, unkind, selfish. It is a positive delight sometimes to watch a thoroughly nasty person, and to reflect how much one detests him. It is a sign of grace to do so. How otherwise should one learn to hate oneself? If you hate nobody, what reason is there for trying to improve? It is impossible to realise how nasty you yourself can be until you have seen other people being nasty. Then you say to yourself, 'Come, that is the kind of thing that I do. Can I really be like that?'"

"But surely," said Lestrange, "if you do not try to love people, you cannot do anything for them; you cannot wish them to be different."

"Why not?" said Father Payne, laughing. "You may hate them so much that you may wish them to be different. That is the sound way to begin. I say to myself, 'Here is a truly dreadful person! I would abolish and obliterate him, if I could; but as I cannot, I must try to get him out of this mess, that we may live more at ease.' It is simple humbug to pretend to like everyone. You may not think it is entirely people's fault that they are so unpleasant; but if you really love fine and beautiful things, you must hate mean and ugly things. Don't let there be any misunderstanding," he said, smiling round the table. "I have hated most of you at different times, some of you very much. I don't deny there are good points about you, but that isn't enough. Sometimes you are detestable!"

"I see what you mean," said Barthrop; "but you don't hate people—you only hate things in them and about them. It is just a selection."

"Not at all," said Father Payne. "How are you going to separate people's qualities and attributes from themselves? It is a process of addition and subtraction, if you like. There may be a balance in your favour. But when a bad mood is on, when a person is bilious, fractious, ugly, cross, you hate him. It is natural to do so, and it is right to do so. I do loathe this talk of mild, weak, universal love. The only chance of human beings getting on at all, or improving at all, is that they should detest what is detestable, as they abominate

a bad smell. The only reason why we are clean is because we have gradually learnt to hate bad smells. A bad smell means something dangerous in the background—so do ugliness, ill-health, bad temper, vanity, greediness, stupidity, meanness. They are all danger signals. We have no business to ignore them, or to forget them, or to make allowances for them. They are all part of the beastliness of the world."

"But if we believe in God, and in God's goodness —if He does not hate anything which He has made," said Lestrange rather ruefully, "ought we not to try to do the same?"

"My dear Lestrange," said Father Payne, "one would think you were teaching a Sunday-school class! How do you know that God made the nasty things? One must not think so ill of Him as that! It is better to think of God as feeble and inefficient, than to make Him responsible for all the filth and ugliness of the world. He hates them as much as you do, you may be sure of that—and is as anxious as you are, and a great deal more anxious, to get rid of them. God is infinitely more concerned about it, much more disappointed about it, than you or me. Why, you and I are often taken in. We don't always know when things are rotten. I have made friends before now with people who seemed charming, and I have found out that I was wrong. But I do not think that God is taken in. It is a very mixed affair, of course; but one thing is clear, that something very filthy is discharging itself into the world, like a sewer into a river. I am not going to credit God with that; He is trying to get rid of it, you may be sure, and He cannot do it

as fast as He would like. We have got to sympathise with Him, and we have got to help Him. Come, someone else must talk—I must get on with my dinner." Father Payne addressed himself to his plate with obvious appetite.

"It is all my fault," said Vincent, "but I am not going to tell you whom I meant, and Barthrop must not. But I will tell you how it was. I was with this man, who is an old acquaintance of mine. I used to know him when I was living in London. I met him the other day, and he asked me to luncheon. He was pleasant enough, but after lunch he said to me that he was going to take the privilege of an old friend, and give me some advice. He began by paying me compliments; he said that he had thought a year ago that I was really going to do something in literature. 'You had made a little place for yourself,' he said; 'you had got your foot on the ladder. You knew the right people. You had a real chance of success. Then, in the middle of it all, you go and bury yourself in the country with an old '—no, I can't say it."

"Don't mind me!" said Father Payne.

"Very well," said Vincent, "if you *will* hear it—'with an old humbug, and a set of asses. You sit in each others' pockets, you praise each others' stuff, you lead what you call the simple life. Where will you all be five years hence?' I told him that I didn't know, and I didn't care. Then he lost his temper, and, what was worse, he thought he was keeping it. 'Very well,' he said. 'Now I will tell you what you ought to be doing. You ought to have buckled to your work, pushed yourself quietly in all directions, never have written any-

thing, or made a friend, or accepted an invitation, without saying, "Will this add to my consequence?" We must all nurse our reputations in this world. They don't come of themselves—they have to be made!' Well, I thought this all very sickening, and I said I didn't care a d—n about my reputation. I said I had a chance of living with people whom I liked, and of working at things I cared about, and I thought his theories simply disgusting and vulgar. He showed his teeth at that, and said that he had spoken as a true friend, and that it had been a painful task; and then I said I was much obliged to him, and came away. That's the story!"

"That's all right," said Father Payne, "and I am much obliged to you for the sidelight on my character. But there is something in what he said, you know. You are rather unpractical! I shall send you back for a bit to London, I think!"

"Why on earth do you say that?" said Vincent, looking a little crestfallen.

"Because you mind it too much, my boy," said Father Payne. "You must not get soft. That's the danger of this life! It's all very well for me; I'm tough, and I'm moderately rich. But you would not have cared so much if you had not thought there *was* something in what he said. It was very low, no doubt, and I give you leave to hate him; though, if you are going to lead the detached life, you must be detached. But now I have caught you up—and we will go back a little. The mistake you made, Vincent, if I may say so, was to be angry. You may hate people, but you must not show that you hate them. That is the practical

side of the principle. The moment you begin to squabble, and to say wounding things, and to try to *hurt* the person you hate, you are simply putting yourself on his level. And you must not be shocked or pained either. That is worse still, because it makes you superior, without making you engaging."

"Then what *are* you to do?" said Barthrop.

"Try persuasion if you like," said Father Payne, "but you had better fall back on attractive virtue! You must ignore the nastiness, and give the pleasant qualities, if there are any, room to manœuvre. But I admit it is a difficult job, and needs some practice."

"But I don't see any principle about it," said Vincent.

"There isn't any," said Father Payne;—"at least there is, but you must not dig it in. You mustn't use principles as if they were bayonets. Civility is the best medium. If you appear to be fatuously unconscious of other people's presence, of course they want to make themselves felt. But if you are good-humoured and polite, they will try to make you think well of them. That is probably why your friend calls me a humbug—he thinks I can't feel as polite as I seem."

"But if you are dealing with a real egotist," said Vincent, "what are you to do then?"

"Keep the talk firmly on himself," said Father Payne, "and, if he ever strays from the subject, ask him a question about himself. Egotists are generally clever people, and no clever people like being drawn out, while no egotists like to be perceived to be egotists. You know the old saying that a bore is a person who wants to talk about

himself when you want to talk about *yourself*. It is the pull against him that makes the bore want to hold his own. The first duty of the evangelist is to learn to pay compliments unobtrusively."

"That's rather a nauseous prescription!" said Lestrange, making a face.

"Well, you can begin with that," said Father Payne, "and when I see you perfect in it, I will tell you something else. Let's have some music, and let me get the taste of all this high talk out of my mouth!"

XV

OF WRITING

THERE were certain days when Father Payne would hurry in to meals late and abstracted, with a cloudy eye, that, as he ate, was fixed on a point about a yard in front of him, or possibly about two miles away. He gave vague or foolish replies to questions, he hastened away again, having heard voices but seen no one. I doubt if he could have certainly named anyone in the room afterwards.

I had a little question of business to ask him on one such occasion after breakfast. I slipped out but two minutes after him, went to his study, and knocked. An obscure sound came from within. He was seated on his chair, bending over his writing-table,

"May I ask you something?" I said.

"Damnation!" said Father Payne.

I apologised, and tried to withdraw on tiptoe, but he said, turning half round, somewhat impatiently,

"Oh, come in, come in—it's all right. What do you want?"

"I don't want to disturb you," I said.

"Come in, I tell you!" he said, adding, "you may just as well, because I have nothing to do for a quarter of an hour." He threw a pen on the table. "It's one of my very few penances. If I swear when I am at work, I do no work for a quarter of an hour; so you can keep me company. Sit down there!" He indicated a chair with his large foot, and I sate down.

My question was soon asked and sooner answered. Father Payne beamed upon me with an indulgent air, and I said: "May I ask what you were doing?"

"You may," he said. "I rejoice to talk about it. It's my novel."

"Your novel!" I said. "I didn't know you wrote novels. What sort of a book is it?"

"It's wretched," he said, "it's horrible, it's grotesque! It's more like all other novels than any book I know. It's written in the most abominable style; there isn't a single good point about it. The incidents are all hackneyed, there isn't a single lifelike character in it, or a single good description, or a single remark worth making. I should think it's the worst book ever written. Will you hear a bit of it? Do, now! only a short bit. I should love to read it to you."

"Yes, of course," I said, "there is nothing I should like better."

He read a passage. It was very bad indeed. I couldn't have imagined that an able man could have written such stuff. I had an awful feeling that I had heard every word before.

"There," he said at last, "that's rather a favourable specimen. What do you think of it? Come, out with it."

"I'm afraid I'm not very much of a judge," I said.

His face fell. "That's what everyone says," he said. "I know what you mean. But I'll publish it—I'll be d—d if I won't! Oh, dash it, that's five minutes more. No—I wasn't working, was I? Just conversing."

"But why do you write it, if you are so dissatisfied with it?" I said feebly.

"Why?" he said in a loud voice. "Why? Because I love it. I'm besotted by it. It's like strong drink to me. I doubt if there's a man in England who enjoys himself more than I do when I'm writing. The worst of it is, that it won't come out—it's beautiful enough when I think of it, but I can't get it down. It's my second novel, mind you, and I have got plans for three more. Do you suppose I'm going to sit here, with all you fellows enjoying yourselves, and not have my bit of fun? But it's hopeless, and I ought to be ashamed of myself. There simply isn't anything in the world, that I should not be better employed in doing than in scribbling this stuff. I know that; but all the authors I know say that writing a book is the part they enjoy—they don't care about correcting proofs, or publishing, or seeing reviews, or being paid for it. Very disinterested and noble, of course! Now I should enjoy it all through, but I simply daren't publish my last one—I should be hooted in the village when the reviews appeared. But I am going to have my fun—the act of creation, you

know! But it's too late to begin, and I have had no training. The beastly thing is as sticky as treacle. It's a sort of vomit of all the novels I have ever read, and that's the truth!"

"I simply don't understand," I said. "I have heard you criticise books, I have heard you criticise some of our work—you have criticised mine. I think you one of the best critics I ever heard. You seem to know exactly how it ought to be done."

"Yes," he said, frowning, "I believe I do. That's just it! I'm a critic, pure and simple. I can't look at anything, from a pigstye to a cathedral, or listen to anything, from a bird singing to an orchestra, or read anything, from Bradshaw to Shakespeare, without seeing when it is out of shape and how it ought to be done. I'm like the man in Ezekiel, whose appearance was like the appearance of brass, with a line of flax in his hand and a measuring reed. He goes on measuring everything for about five chapters, and nothing comes of it, as far as I can remember! I suppose I ought to be content with that, but I can't bear it. I hate fault-finding. I want to make beautiful things. I spent months over my last novel, and, as Aaron said to Moses, 'There came out this calf!' I'm a very unfortunate man. If I had not had to work so hard for many years for a bare living, I could have done something with writing, I think. But now I'm a sort of plumber, mending holes in other people's work. Never mind. I *will* waste my time!"

All this while he was eyeing the little clock on his table. "Now be off!" he said suddenly. "My penance is over, and I won't be disturbed!"

He caught up his pen. "You had better tell the others not to come near me, or I'm blessed if I won't read the whole thing aloud after dinner!" And he was immersed in his work again.

Two or three days later I found Father Payne strolling in the garden, on a bright morning. It was just on the verge of spring. There were catkins in the shrubbery. The lilacs were all knobbed with green. The aconite was in full bloom under the trees, and the soil was all pricked with little green blades. He was drinking it all in with delighted glances. I said something about his book.

"Oh, the fit's off!" said he; "I'm sober again! I finished the chapter, and, by Jove, I think it's the worst thing I have done yet. It's simply infamous! I read it with strong sensations of nausea! I really don't know how I can get such deplorable rubbish down on paper. No matter, I get all the rapture of creation, and that's the best part of it. I simply couldn't live without it. It clears off some perilous stuff or other, and now I feel like a convalescent. Did you ever see anything so enchanting as that aconite? The colour of it, and the way the little round head is tucked down on the leaves! I could improve on it a trifle, but not much. God must have had a delicious time designing flowers—I wonder why He gave up doing it, and left it to the market-gardeners. I can't make out why new flowers don't keep appearing. I could offer a few suggestions. I dream of flowers sometimes—great banks of bloom rising up out of crystal rivers, in deep gorges, full of sunshine and scent. How nice it is to be idle! I'm sure I've earned it, after that deplorable chapter. It really is a miracle of flat-

ness! You go back to your work, my boy, and thank God you can say what you mean! And then you can bring it to me, and I'll tell you to an inch what it is worth!"

XVI

OF MARRIAGE

We were all at dinner one day, and Father Payne came in, in an excited mood, with a letter in his hand. "Here's a bit of nonsense," he said. "Here's my old friend Davenport giving me what he calls a piece of his mind—he can't have much left—about my 'celibate brotherhood,' as he calls it. It's all the other way! I am rather relieved when I hear that any of you people are happily engaged to be married. Celibacy is the danger of my experiment. not the object of it."

"*Do* you wish us to be married?" said Kaye. "That's new to me. I thought this was a little fortress against the eternal feminine."

"What rubbish!" said Father Payne. "The worst of using ridiculous words like feminine is that it blinds people to the truth. Masculine and feminine have nothing to do with sex. In the first place, intellectual people are all rather apt to be sexless; in the next place, all sensible people, men and women alike, are what is meant by masculine—that is to say, spirited, generous, tolerant, good-natured, frank. Thirdly, all suspicious, scheming, sensitive, theatrical, irritable, vain people are what is meant by feminine. And artistic natures are all prone to those failings, because they desire dignity

and influence—they want to be felt. The real difference between people is whether they want to live, or whether they want to be known to exist. The worst of feminine people is that they are probably the people who ought not to marry, unless they marry a masculine person; and they are not, as a rule, attracted by masculinity."

"But one can't get married in cold blood," said Vincent. "I often wish that marriages could just be arranged, as they do it in France. I think I should be a very good husband, but I shall never have the courage or the time to go in search of a wife."

"That's why I send you all out into the world," said Father Payne. "Most people ought to be married. It's a normal thing—it isn't a transcendental thing. In my experience most marriages are successful. It does everyone good to be obliged to live at close quarters with other people, and to be unable to get away from them."

"I didn't know you were interested in such matters," said someone.

"I have gone into it pretty considerably, sir," said Father Payne. "The one thing that does interest me is human admixtures. It does no one any good to get too much attached to his own point of view."

"But surely," said Rose, "there are some marriages which are obviously bad for all concerned—real incompatibilities? People who can't understand each other or their children—children who can't understand their parents? It always seems to me rather horrible that people should be shut up together like rats in a cage."

"I expect we shall have legislation before long," said Father Payne, "for breaking up homes where some definite evil like drunkenness is at work—but I don't want industrial schools for children; that is even more inhuman than a bad home. We want more boarding out, but that's expensive. Someone has to pay, if children are to be planted out, and to pay well. There's no motive of duty so strong for an Englishman as good wages. People are honest about giving fair money's worth. But it is no good talking about these things, because they are all so far ahead of us. The question is whether anyone can suggest any practical means of filing away any of the roughnesses of marriage. I do not believe that the problem is very serious among workers. It is the marriage of idle people that is apt to be disastrous."

"The thing that damages many marriages," said Rose, "is the fact that people have got to see so much of each other. What people really want is a holiday from each other."

"Yes, but that is impossible financially," said Father Payne. "Apart from love and children, marriage is a small joint-stock company for cheap comfort. But it is of no use to go vapouring on about these big schemes, because in a democracy people won't do what philosophers wish, but what they want. Let's take a notorious case, known to everyone. Can anyone say what practical advice he could have given to either Carlyle or to Mrs. Carlyle, which would have improved that witches' cauldron? There were two high-principled Puritanical people, which is the same thing as saying that they both were disposed to consider that any-

one who disagreed with them did so for a bad motive, and exalted their own whims and prejudices into moral principles; both of them irritable and sensitive, both able to give instantaneous and elaborate expression to their vaguest thoughts,—Carlyle himself with eloquence which he wielded like a bludgeon, and Mrs. Carlyle with incisiveness which she used like a sharp knife—Carlyle with too much to do, and Mrs. Carlyle with less than nothing to do—each passionately attached to the other as soon as they were separated, and both capable of saying the sweetest and most affectionate things by letter, which they could not for the life of them utter in talk. They did, as a matter of fact, spend an immense amount of time apart; and when they were together, Carlyle, having been trained as a peasant and one of a large family, roughly neglected Mrs. Carlyle, while Mrs. Carlyle, with a middle-class training, and moreover indulged as an only daughter, was too proud to complain, but not proud enough not to resent the neglect deeply. What could have been done for them? Were they impossible people to live with? Was it true, as Tennyson bluntly said, that it was as well that they married, because two people were unhappy instead of four?"

"They wanted a child as a go-between!" said Barthrop.

"Of course they did!" said Father Payne. "That would have pulled the whole ménage together. And don't tell me that it was a wise dispensation that they were childless! Cleansing fires? The fires in which they lived, with Carlyle raging about porridge and milk and crowing cocks,

working alone, walking alone, flying off to see Lady Ashburton, sleeping alone; and Mrs. Carlyle, whom everyone else admired and adored, eating her heart out because she could not get him to value her company;—there was not much that was cleansing about all that! The cleansing came when she was dead, and when he saw what he had done."

"I expect they have made it up by now," said Kaye.

"You're quite right!" said Father Payne. "It matters less with those great vivid people. They can afford to remember. But the little people, who simply end further back than they began, what is to be done for them?"

XVII

OF LOVING GOD

FATHER PAYNE suddenly said to me once in a loud voice, after a long silence—we were walking together—"Writers, preachers, moralists, sentimentalists, are much to blame for not explaining more what they mean by loving God—perhaps they do not know! Love is so large a word, and covers so great a range of feelings. What sort of love are we to give God—the love of the lover, or the son, or the daughter, or the friend, or the patriot, or the dog? Is it to be passion, or admiration, or reverence, or fidelity, or pity? All of these enter into love."

"What do you think yourself?" I said.

"How am I to tell?" said Father Payne. "I

am in many minds about it—it cannot be passion, because, whatever one may say, something of physical satisfaction is mingled with that. It cannot be a dumb fidelity—that is irrational. It cannot be an equal friendship, because there is no equality possible. It cannot be that of the child for the mother, because the mind is hardly concerned in that. Can one indeed love the Unknown? Again, it cannot be all receiving and no giving. We must have something to give God which He desires to have and which we can withhold. To say that the answer is, 'My son, give Me thy heart,' begs the question, because the one thing certain about love is that we *cannot* give it to whom we will—it must be evoked; and even if it is wanted, we cannot always give it. We may respect and reverence a person very much, but, as Charlotte Brontë said, 'our veins may run ice whenever we are near him.'

"And then, too, can we love any one who knows us perfectly, through and through? Is it not of the essence of love to be blind? Is it possible for us to feel that we are worthy of the love of anyone who really knows us?

"And then, too, if disaster and suffering and cruel usage and terror come from God, without reference to the sensitiveness of the soul and body on which they fall, can we possibly love the Power which behaves so? What child could love a father who might at any time strike him? I cannot believe that God wants an unquestioning and fatuous trust, and still less the sort of deference we pay to one who may do us a mischief if we do not cringe before him. All that is utterly unworthy of the mind and soul."

"Is it not possible to believe," I said, "that all experience may be good for us, however harsh it seems?"

"No rational man can think that," said Father Payne. "Suffering is not good for people if it is severe and protracted. I have seen many natures go utterly to pieces under it."

"What do you believe, then?" I said.

"Of course the only obvious explanation," said Father Payne, "is that suffering, misery, evil, disaster, disease do not come from God at all; that He is the giver of health and joy and light and happiness; that He gives us all He can, and spares us all He can; but that there is a great enemy in the world, whom He cannot instantly conquer; that He is doing all He can to shield us, and to repair the harm that befalls us—that we can make common cause with Him, and pity Him for His thwarted plans, His endless disappointments, His innumerable failures, His grievous sufferings. It would be easy to love God if He were like that—yet who dares to say it or to teach it? It is the dreadful doctrine of His Omnipotence that ruins everything. I cannot hold any communication with Omnipotence—it is a consuming fire; but if I could know that God was strong and patient and diligent, but not all-powerful or all-knowing, then I could commune with Him. If, when some evil mishap overtakes me, I could say to Him, 'Come, help me, console me, show me how to mend this, give me all the comfort you can,' then I could turn to Him in love and trust, so long as I could feel that He did not wish the disaster to happen to me but could not ward it off, and was as miserable as

myself that it had happened. Not *so* miserable, of course, because He has waited so long, suffered so much, and can discern so bright and distant a hope. Then, too, I might feel that death was perhaps our escape from many kinds of evil, and that I should be clasped to His heart for awhile, even though He sent me out again to fight His battles. That would evoke all my love and energy and courage, because I could feel that I could give Him my help; but if He is Almighty, and could have avoided all the sorrow and pain, then I am simply bewildered and frightened, because I can predicate nothing about Him."

"Is not that the idea which Christianity aims at?" I said.

"Yes," he said; "the suffering Saviour, who can resist evil and amend it, but cannot instantly subdue it; but, even so, it seems to set up two Gods for one. The mind cannot really *identify* the Saviour with the Almighty Designer of the Universe. But the thought of the Saviour *does* interpret the sense of God's failure and suffering, does bring it all nearer to the heart. But if there is Omnipotence behind, it all falls to the ground again—at least it does for me. I cannot pray to Omnipotence and Omniscience, because it is useless to do so. The limited and the unlimited cannot join hands. I must, if I am to believe in God, believe in Him as a warrior arriving on a scene of disorder, and trying to make all well. He must not have permitted the disorder to grow up, and then try to subdue it. It must be there first. It is a battle obviously—but it must be a real battle against a real foe, not a sham fight between hosts created by God. In

that case, 'to think of oneself as an instrument of God's designs is a privilege one shares with the devil,' as someone said. I will not believe that He is so little in earnest as that. No, He is the great invader, who desires to turn darkness to light, rage to peace, misery to happiness. Then, and only then, can I enlist under His banner, fight for Him, honour Him, worship Him, compassionate Him, and even love Him; but if He is in any way responsible for evil, by design or by neglect, then I am lost indeed!"

XVIII

OF FRIENDSHIP

"HE is the sort of man who is always losing his friends," said Pollard at dinner to Father Payne, describing someone, "and I always think that's a bad sign."

"And I, on the contrary," said Father Payne, "think that a man who always keeps his friends is almost always an ass!" He opened his mouth and drew in his breath.

"Or else it means," said Barthrop, "that he has never really made any friends at all!"

"Quite right," said Father Payne. "People talk about friendship as if it was a perfectly normal thing, like eating and drinking—it's not that! It's a difficult thing, and it is a rare thing. I do not mean mere proximities and easy comradeships and muddled alliances; there are plenty of frank and pleasant companionships about of a solid kind. Still less do I mean the sort of thing which is con-

tained in such an expression as 'Dear old boy!' which is always a half-contemptuous phrase."

"But isn't loyalty a fine quality?" said Lestrange.

"Loyalty!" said Father Payne. "Of course you must play fair, and be ready to stick by a man, and do him a kindness, and help him up if he has a fall; but that is not friendship—at least it isn't what I mean by friendship. Friendship is a sort of passion, without anything sexual or reproductive about it. There is a physical basis about it, of course. I mean there are certain quite admirable, straightforward, pleasant people, whom you may meet and like, and yet with whom you could never be friends, though they may be quite capable of friendship, and have friends of their own. A man's presence and his views and emotions must be in some sort of tune with your own. There are certain people, not in the least repellent, genial, kindly, handsome, excellent in every way, with whom you simply are not comfortable. On the other hand, there are people of no great obvious attractiveness with whom you feel instantaneously at ease. There is something mysterious about it, some currents that don't mix, and some that do. A thousand years hence we shall probably know something about it we don't now."

"I feel that very strongly about books," said Kaye. "There are certain authors, who have skill, charm, fancy, invention, style—all the things you value—who yet leave you absolutely cold. They have every qualification for pleasing except the power to please. It is simply a case of Dr. Fell! You can't give a single valid reason why you don't like them."

"Yes, indeed," said Father Payne. "And then, again, there are authors whom you like at a certain age and under certain circumstances, and who end by boring you; and again, authors whom you don't like when you are young, and like better when you are old. Does your idea of loyalty apply also to books, Lestrange, or to music?"

"No," said Lestrange, "to be frank, it does not; but I think that is different—a lot of technical things come in, and then one's taste alters."

"And that is just the same with people," said Father Payne. "Why, what does loyalty mean in such a connection? You have admired a book or a piece of music; you cease to admire it. Are you to go on saying you admire it, or to pretend to yourself that you admire it? Of course not—that is simply hypocrisy—there is nothing real about that."

"But what are you to do," said Vincent, "about people? You can't treat them like books or music. You need not go on reading a book which you have ceased to admire. But what if you have made a friend, and then ceased to care for him, and he goes on caring for you? Are you to throw him over?"

"I admit that there is a difficulty," said Father Payne; "I agree that you must not disappoint people; but it is also somehow your duty to get out of a relation that is no longer a real one. It can't be wholesome to simulate emotions for the sake of loyalty. It must all depend upon which you think the finer thing—the emotion or the tie. Personally, I think the emotion is the more sacred of the two."

"But does it not mean that you have made a mistake somehow," said Vincent, "if you have made a friend, and then cease to care about him?"

"Not a bit," said Father Payne. "Why, people change very much, and some people change faster than others. A man may be exactly what you want at a certain time of life; he may be ahead of you in ideas, in qualities, in emotions; and what starts a friendship is the perception of something fine and desirable in another, which you admire and want to imitate. But then you may outstrip your friend. Take the case of an artist. He may have an admiration for another artist, and gain much from him; but then he may go right ahead of him. He can't go on admiring and deferring out of mere loyalty."

"But must there not be in every real friendship a *purpose* of continuance?" said Vincent. "It surely is a very selfish sort of business, if you say to yourself, 'I will make friends with this man because I admire him now, but when I have got all I can out of him, I will discard him.'"

"Of course, you must not think in that cold-blooded way," said Father Payne, "but it can never be more than a *hope* of continuance. You may *hope* to find a friendship a continuous and far-reaching thing. It may be quite right to get to know a man, believing him to have fine qualities; but you can't pledge yourself to admire whatever you find in him. We have to try experiments in friendship as in everything else. It is purely sentimental to say, 'I am going to believe in this man blindfold, whatever I find him to be.' That's a rash vow! You must not take rash vows; and if

you do, you must be prepared to break them. Besides, you can't depend upon your friend not altering. He may lose some of the very things you most admire. The mistake is to believe that anything can be consistent or permanent."

"But if you *don't* believe that," said Lestrange, "are you justified in entering upon intimate relations at all?"

"Of course you are," said Father Payne; "you can't live life on prudent lines. You can't say, 'I won't engage in life, or take a hand in it, or believe in it, or love it, till I know more about it.' You can't foresee all contingencies and risks. You must take risks."

"I expect," said Barthrop, "that we are meaning different things by friendship. Let us define our terms. What do *you* mean by friendship, Father?"

"Well," said Father Payne, "I will tell you if I can. I mean a consciousness, which generally comes rather suddenly, of the charm of a particular person. You have a sudden curiosity about him. You want to know what his ideas, motives, views of life are. It is not by any means always that you think he feels about things as you do yourself. It is often the difference in him which attracts you. But you like his manner, his demeanour, his handling of life. What he says, his looks, his gestures, his personality, affect you in a curious way. And at the same time you seem to discern a corresponding curiosity in him about yourself. It is a pleasurable surprise both to discover that he agrees with you, and also that he disagrees with you. There is a beauty, a mystery, about it all. Generally you think it rather surprising that he should find

you interesting. You wish to please him and to satisfy his expectations. That is the dangerous part of friendship, that two people in this condition make efforts, sacrifices, suppressions, in order to be liked. Even if you disagree, you both give hints that you are prepared to be converted. There is a sudden increase of richness in life, the sense of a moving current whose impulse you feel. You meet, you talk, you find a freshness of feeling, light cast upon dark things, a new range of ideas vividly present."

"But isn't all that rather intellectual?" said Vincent, who had been growing restive. "The thing can surely be much simpler than that?"

"Yes, of course it can," said Father Payne, "among simple people—but we are all complicated people here."

"Yes," said Vincent, "we are! But isn't it possible for an intellectual man to feel a real friendship for a quite unintellectual man—not a desire to discuss everything with him, but a simple admiration for fine frank qualities?"

"Oh yes," said Father Payne, "there can be all sorts of alliances; but I am not speaking of them. I am speaking of a sort of mutual understanding. In friendship, as I understand it, the two must not speak different languages. They must be able to put their minds fairly together—there can be a kind of man-and-dog friendship, of course, but that is more a sort of love and trust. Now in friendship people must be mutually intelligible. It need not be equality—it is very often far removed from that; but there must not be any condescension. There must be a *desire* for equality, at all events. Each

must lament anything, whether it is superiority or inferiority, which keeps the two apart. It must be a desire for unity above everything. There must not be the smallest shadow of contempt on either side—it must be a frank proffer of the best you have to give, and a knowledge that the other can give you something—sympathy, support, help—which you cannot do without. What breaks friendship, in my experience, is the loss of that sense of equality; and the moment that friends become critical—in the sense, I mean, that they want to alter or improve each other—I think a friendship is in danger. If you have a friend, you must be indulgent to his faults—like him, not in spite of them, but almost because of them, I think."

"That's very difficult," said Vincent. "Mayn't you want a friend to improve? If he has some patent and obvious fault, I mean?"

"You mustn't want to improve him," said Father Payne, smiling; "that's not your business—unless he *wants* you to help him to improve; and even then you have to be very delicate-handed. It must *hurt* you to have to wish him different."

"But isn't that what you call sentimental?" said Vincent.

"No," said Father Payne, "it is sentiment to try to pretend to yourself and others that the fault isn't there. But I am speaking of a tie which you can't risk breaking for anything so trivial as a fault. The moment that the fault stands out, naked and unpleasant, then you may know that the friendship is over. There must be a glamour even about your friend's faults. You must love them, as you love the dints and cracks in an old building."

"That seems to me weak," said Vincent.

"You will find that it is true," said Father Payne. "We can't afford to sit in judgment on each other. We must simply try to help each other along. We must not say, 'You ought not to be tired.'"

"But surely we may pity people?" said Lestrange.

"Not your friends," said Father Payne. "Pity is *fatal* to friendship. There is always something complacent in pity—it means conscious strength. You can't both pity and admire. You can't separate people up into qualities—they all come out of the depth of a man; I am quite sure of this, that the moment you begin to differentiate a friend's qualities, that moment what I call friendship is over. It must simply be a case of you and me—not my weakness and your virtue, and still less your weakness and my virtue. And you must be content to lose friends and to be discarded by friends. What is sentimental is to believe that it can be otherwise."

XIX

OF PHYLLIS

It was in the course of July, the month given to hospitality. Father Payne used to have guests of various kinds, quite unaccountable people, some of them, with whom he seemed to be on the easiest of terms, but whom he never mentioned at any other time. "It is a time when I have *old friends* to stay with me," he once said, "and I decline to define

the term. There are *reasons*—you must assume that there are *reasons*—which may not be apparent, for the tie. They are not all selected for intellectual or artistic brilliance—they are the symbols of undesigned friendships, which existed before I exercised the faculty of choice. They are there, uncriticised, unexplained, these friends of mine. The modest man, you will remember, finds his circle ready-made. I am attached to them, and they to me. They understand no language, some of them, as you will see, except the language of the heart; but you will help me, I know, to make them feel at home and happy."

They certainly were odd people, several of them—dumb, good-natured, elderly men with no ostensible purpose in the world; elderly ladies, who called Father Payne "dear"; some simple and homely married couples, who seemed to be living in another century. But Father Payne welcomed them, chattered with them, jested with them, took them drives and walks, and seemed well-contented with their company, though I confess that I generally felt as though I were staying in a seaside boarding-house on such occasions. We used to speculate as to who they were, and how Father Payne had made their acquaintance: we gathered that they were mostly the friends and acquaintances of his youth, or people into whose company he had drifted when he lived in London. Sometimes, before a new arrival, he would touch off his or her character and circumstances in a few words. On one occasion he said after breakfast to Barthrop and me: "Arrivals to-day, Mr. and Mrs. Wetherall—the man a retired coal-merchant, rather wealthy, in-

terested in foreign missions; the woman inert; daughter prevented from coming, and they bring a niece, Phyllis by name, understood to be charming. I undertake the sole charge of Wetherall himself, Mrs. Wetherall requires no specific attentions—placid woman, writes innumerable letters—Miss Phyllis an unknown quantity."

The Wetheralls duly appeared, and proved very simple people. Father Payne, to our surprise, seemed to be soaked in mission literature, and drew out Mr. Wetherall with patient skill. But Miss Phyllis was a perfectly delightful girl, very simple and straightforward, extremely pretty in a boyish fashion, and quite used to the ways of the world. We would willingly have entertained her, and did our best; but she made fast friends with Father Payne, with the utmost promptitude, and the two were for ever strolling about or sitting out together. The talk at meals was of a sedate character, but Miss Phyllis used to intercept Father Payne's humorous remarks with a delighted little smile, and Father Payne would shake his head gravely at her in return. Miss Phyllis said to me one morning, as we were sitting in the garden: "You seem to have a very good time here, all of you—it feels like something in a book—it is too good to be true!"

"Ah," I said, "but this is a holiday, of course! We work very hard in term-time, and we are very serious." Miss Phyllis looked at me with her blue eyes in silence for a moment, with an ironical little curve of her lips, and said: "I don't believe a word of it! I believe it is just a little Paradise, and I suspect it of being rather a selfish Paradise. Why do you shut everyone out?"

"Oh, it is a case of 'business first'!" I said. "Father Payne keeps us all in very good order." "Yes," said Phyllis, "I expect he can do that. But do any of you men realise what an absolutely enchanting person he is? I have never seen anyone in the least like him! He understands everything, and sees everything, and cares for everything—he is so big and kind and clever. Why, isn't he something tremendous?" "He is," I said. "Oh yes, but you know what I mean," said Miss Phyllis; "he's a *great* man, and he ought to have the reins in his hand. He ought not to potter about here!"

"Well," I said, "I have wondered about that myself. But he knows his own mind—he's a very happy man!" Miss Phyllis pondered silently, and said: "I don't think you realise your blessings. Father Payne is like the boy in the story—the man born to be king, you know. He ought not to be wasted like this! He ought to be ruler over ten cities. Dear me, I don't often wish I were a man, but I would give anything to be one of you. Won't you tell me something more about him?"

I did my best, and Phyllis listened absorbed, dangling a shapely little foot over her knee, and playing with a flower. "Yes," she said at last, "that is what I thought! I see you *do* appreciate him after all. I won't make that mistake again." And she gave me a fine smile. I liked the company of this radiant creature, but at this moment Father Payne appeared at the other end of the garden. "Don't think me rude," said Miss Phyllis, "but I am going to talk to Father Payne. It's my last day, and I must get all I can out of him." She

fled, and presently they went off together for a stroll, a charming picture. She carried him off likewise after dinner, and they sate long in the dusk. I could hear Father Payne's emphatic tones and Phyllis's refreshing laughter.

The next morning the Wetheralls went off. Barthrop and I, with Father Payne, saw them go. The Wetheralls were serenely enjoying the prospect of returning home after a successful visit, but Miss Phyllis looked mournful, and as if she were struggling with concealed emotions. She kissed her hand to Father Payne as the carriage drove away.

"Very worthy people!" said Father Payne cheerfully, as the carriage passed out of sight. "I am very glad to have seen them, and no less thankful that they are gone."

"But the charming Phyllis?" said Barthrop. "Is that all you have to say about her? I never saw a more delightful girl!"

"She is—quite delightful," said Father Payne. "Phyllis is my only joy! The sight of her and the sound of her make me feel as if I had been reading an Elizabethan song-book—'Sing hey, nonny nonny!' But why didn't one of you fellows make up to her?—that's a girl worth the winning!"

"Why didn't we make up to her?" I said indignantly. "I wonder you have the face to ask, Father! Why, she was simply taken up with you, and she hadn't a word or a look for anyone else. I never saw such a case of love at first sight!"

"She gave me a flower this morning," said Father Payne meditatively, "and I believe I kissed her hand. It was like a scene in one of my novels.

It wasn't my fault—the woman tempted me, of course! But I think she is a charming creature, and as clever as she is pretty. I could have made love to her with the best will in the world! But that wouldn't do, and I just made friends with her. She wants an older friend, I think. She has ideas, the pretty Phyllis, and she doesn't strike out sparks from the Wetheralls much."

Barthrop went off, smiling to himself, and I strolled about with Father Payne.

"You really could hardly do better than be Phyllis's faithful shepherd," he said to me, smiling. "She's a fine creature, you know, full of fire and vitality, and eager for life. She must marry a nice man and have nice children. We want more people like Phyllis. You consider it, old man! I would like to see you happily married."

"Why, Father," I said boldly, "if you feel like that, why don't you put in for her yourself? Phyllis is in love with you! You may not know it—she may not know it—but I know it. She could talk of nothing else."

"Get thee behind me, Satan!" said Father Payne very emphatically. "Don't say such things to me! The pretty Phyllis wants a father confessor—that's all I can do for her."

"I don't think that is so, Father," I said. "She would be prepared for something much closer than that, if you held out your hand."

Father Payne smiled benignantly at me. "Yes, I know what you mean, old man," he said, "and I daresay it is true! But I mustn't allow myself to think of such things at my age. It wouldn't do. I'm old enough to be her father—and she has just

had a pretty fancy, that's all. It's rather a romantic setting, this place, you know; and she is hungering and thirsting for all sorts of ideas and beautiful adventures; and she finds a good-humoured old bird like myself, who can give her something of what she wants. She is fitful and impetuous, and she wants something strong and fatherly to lean upon and to worship, perhaps. Bless you, I see it all clearly enough! But put the clock on for a few years: the charming Phyllis is made for better things than tying my muffler and walking beside my bath-chair. No, she must have a run for her money. And what's more, I'm not sure that I want the sole charge of that sweet nymph—she would want a lot of response and sympathy and understanding. It's altogether too big a job for me, and I don't feel the call. What do I want, then, with the pretty child? Why, I like to be with her, and to see her, and to hear her talk and laugh. I want to help her along if I can—she is a high-spirited creature, and will take things hardly. But I cannot be romantic, and take advantage of a romantic child. Mind you, I think that these friendships between men and women are good for both, if they aren't complicated by love: the worst of it is that passion is a tindery thing, and lights up suddenly when people least expect it. But I'm too old for all that; and one of the pleasures of growing old is that one can see a beautiful creature like Phyllis—high-spirited, vivid, full of grace and delight—without wanting to claim her for one's own or take her away into a corner. I'm just glad to be with her, glad to think she is in the world, glad to think she comes direct from the Divine hand.

It moves me tremendously, that flashing and brightening charm of hers—but I see and feel it, I think, as something beyond and outside of her, which comes as a message to me. She's a darling! But I am not going to interfere with her or complicate her life. She must find a fit mate, and I am going to let her feel that she can depend on me for any service I can do for her. I don't mind saying, old man," added Father Payne, in a different tone, "that there isn't a touch of temptation about it all. I yield in imagination to it quite frankly—I think how jolly it would be to have a creature like that living in this old house, telling me all she thought about, making a home beautiful. I could make a very fair lover if I tried! But I have got myself well in hand, and I know better. It isn't what she wants, and it isn't really what I want. I have got my work cut out for me; but I'll give her all I can, and be thankful if she gives me a bit of her heart; and I shall love to think of her going about the world, and reminding everyone she meets of the best and purest sort of beauty. I love Phyllis with all my old heart—is that enough for you?—and a great deal too well to confiscate her, as I should certainly have tried to do twenty years ago."

Father Payne stopped, and looked at me with one of his great clear smiles.

"Well, I must say," I began——

"No, you mustn't," said Father Payne. "I know all the excellent arguments you would advance. Why shouldn't two people be happy and not look ahead, and all that? I do look ahead, and I'm going to make her happy if I can. Shall

I use my influence in your favour, my boy? How does that strike you?"

I laughed and reddened. Father Payne put his arm in mine, and said: "Now, I have turned my heart out for your inspection, and you can't convert me. Let the pretty child go her way! I only wish she was likely to get more fun out of the Wetheralls. Such excellent people too: but a lack of inspiration—not propelled from quite the central fount of beauty, I fancy! But it will do Phyllis good to make the best of them, and I fancy she is trying pretty hard. Dear me, I wish she were my niece! But I couldn't have her here—we should all be at daggers drawn in a fortnight: that's the puzzling thing about these beautiful people, that they light up such conflagrations, and make such havoc of divine philosophy, old boy!"

XX

OF CERTAINTY

WE were returning from a walk, Father Payne and I; as we passed the churchyard, he said: "Do you remember that story of Lamennais at La Chênaie? He was sitting behind the chapel under two Scotch firs which grew there, with some of his young disciples. He took his stick, and marked out a grave on the turf, and said: 'It is there I would wish to be buried, but no tombstone! Only a simple mound of grass. Oh, how well I shall be there!' That is what I call sentiment. If Lamennais really thought he would be confined in

spirit to such a place, he would not tolerate it—least of all a combative fellow like Lamennais—it would be a perpetual solitary confinement. Such a cry is merely a theatrical way of saying that he felt tired. Yet it is such sayings which impress people, because men love rhetoric."

Presently he went on: "It is strange that what one fears in death is the vagueness and the solitude of it—we are afraid of finding ourselves lost in the night. It would be agitating, but not frightful, if we were sure of finding company; and if we were *sure* of meeting those whom we had loved and lost, death would not frighten us at all. Dying is simple enough, and indeed easy, for most of us. But I expect that something very precise and definite happens to us, the moment we die. It is probable, I think, that we shall set about building up a new body to inhabit at once, as a snail builds its shell. We are very definite creatures, all of us, with clearly apportioned tastes and energies, preferences and dislikes. The only puzzling thing is that we do not all of us seem to have the bodies which suit us here on earth: fiery spirits should have large phlegmatic bodies, and they too often have weak and inadequate bodies. Beautiful spirits cannot always make their bodies beautiful, and evil people have often very lovely shapes and faces. I confess I find all that very mysterious; heredity is quite beyond me. If it were merely confined to the body and even the mind, I should not wonder at it, but it seems to affect the soul as well. Who can feel free in will, if that is the case? And now, too, they say with some certainty that it seems as though all their own qualities need not be transmitted by

parents, but that no quality can be transmitted which is not present in the parents—that we can lose qualities, that is, but not gain them. If that is true, then all our qualities were present in primitive forms of life, and we are not really developing, we are only specialising. All this hurts one to think of, because it ties us hand and foot."

Presently he went on: "How ludicrous, after all, to make up our mind about things as most of us do! I believe that the desire for certainty is one of the worst temptations of the devil. It means closing our eyes and minds and hearts to experience; and yet it seems the only way to accomplish anything. I trust," he said, turning to me with a look of concern, "that you do not feel that you are being formed or moulded here, by me or by any of the others?"

"No," I said, "certainly not! I feel, indeed, since I came here, that I have got a wider horizon of ideas, and I hope I am a little more tolerant. I have certainly learnt from you not to despise ideas or experiences at first sight, but to look into them."

He seemed pleased at this, and said: "Yes, to look into them—we must do that! When we see anyone acting in a way that we admire, or even in a way which we dislike, we must try to see why he acts so, what makes him what he is. We must not despise any indications. On the whole, I think that people behave well when they are happy, and ill when they are afraid. All violence and spite come when we are afraid of being left out; and we are happy when we are using all our powers. Don't be too prudent! Don't ever be afraid of uprooting yourself," he added with great emphasis. "Try

experiments—in life, in work, in companionship. Have an open mind! That is why we should be so careful what we pray for, because in my experience prayers are generally granted, and often with a fine irony. The grand irony of God! It is one of the things that most reassures me about Him, to find that He can be ironical and indulgent; because our best chance of discovering the nature of things is that we should be given what we wish, just in order to find out that it was not what we wished at all!"

"But," I said, "if you are for ever experimenting, always moving on, always changing your mind, don't you run the risk of never mixing with life at all?"

"Oh, life will take care of that!" said Father Payne, smiling. "The time will come when you will know where to post your battery, and what to fire at. But don't try to make up your mind too early—don't try to fortify yourself against doubts and anxieties. That is the danger of all sensitive people. You can't attain to proved certainties in this life—at least, you can't at present. I don't say that there are not certainties—indeed, I think that it is all certainty, and that we mustn't confuse the unknown with the unknowable. As you go on, if you are fair-minded and sympathetic, you will get intuitions: you will discover gradually exactly what you are worth, and what you can do, and how you can do it best. But don't expect to know that too soon. And don't yield to the awful temptation of saying, 'So many good, fine, reasonable people seem certain of this and that; I had better assume it to be true.' It isn't better, it is

only more comfortable. A great many more people suffer from making up their mind too early and too decisively than suffer from open-mindedness and the power to relate new experience to old experience. No one can write you out a prescription for life. You can't anticipate experience; and if you do, you will only find that you have to begin all over again."

XXI

OF BEAUTY

FATHER PAYNE had been away on one of his rare journeys. He always maintained that a journey was one of the most enlivening things in the world, if it was not too often indulged in. "It intoxicates me," he said, "to see new places, houses, people."

"Why don't you travel more, then?" said someone.

"For that very reason," said Father Payne; "because it intoxicates me—and I am too old for that sort of self-indulgence!"

"It's a dreadful business," he went on, "that northern industrial country. There's a grandeur about it—the bare valleys, the steep bleak fields, the dead or dying trees, the huge factories. Those great furnaces, with tall iron cylinders and galleries, and spidery contrivances, and black pipes, and engines swinging vast burdens about, and moving wheels, are fearfully interesting and magnificent. They stand for all sorts of powers and forces; they frighten me by their strength and fierceness and

submissiveness. But the land is awfully barren of beauty, and I doubt if that can be wholesome. It all fascinates me, it increases my pride, but it makes me unhappy too, because it excludes beauty so completely. Those bleak stone-walled fields of dirty grass, the lines of grey houses, are fine in their way—but one wants colour and clearness. I longed for a glimpse of elms and water-meadows, and soft-wooded pastoral hills. It produces a shrewd, strong, good-tempered race, but very little genius. There is something harsh about Northerners—they haven't enough colour."

"But you are always saying," said Rose, "that we must look after form, and chance colour."

"Yes, but that is because you are *in statu pupillari*," said Father Payne. "If a man begins by searching for colour and ornament and richness, he gets clotted and glutinous. Colour looks after itself—but it isn't clearness that I am afraid of, it is shrewdness—I think that is, on the whole, a low quality, but it is awfully strong! What I am afraid of, in bare laborious country like that, is that people should only think of what is comfortable and sensible. Imagination is what really matters. It is not enough to have solid emotions; one ought not to be too reasonable about emotions. The thing is to care in an unreasonable and rapturous way about beautiful things, and not to know why one cares. That is the point of things which are simply beautiful and nothing else,—that you feel it isn't all capable of explanation."

"But isn't that rather sentimental?" said Rose.

"No, no, it's just the opposite," said Father Payne. "Sentiment is when one understands and

exaggerates an emotion; beauty isn't that—it is something mysterious and inexplicable; it makes you bow the head and worship. Take the sort of thing you may see on the coast of Italy—a blue sea, with gray and orange cliffs falling steeply down into deep water; a gap, with a clustering village, coming down, tier by tier, to the sea's edge; fantastic castles on spires of rock, thickets and dingles running down among the clefts and out on the ledges, and perhaps a glimpse of pale, fantastic hills behind. No one could make it or design it; but every line, every blending colour, all combine to give you the sense of something marvellously and joyfully contrived, and made for the richness and sweetness of it. That is the sort of moment when I feel the overwhelming beauty and nearness of God—everything done on a vast scale, which floods mind and heart with utter happiness and wonder. Anything so overpoweringly joyful and delicious and useless as all that *must* come out of a fulness of joy. The sharp cliffs mean some old cutting and slashing, the blistering and burning of the earth; and yet those old rents have been clothed and mollified by some power that finds it worth while to do it—and it isn't done for you or me, either—there must be treasures of loveliness going on hidden for centuries in tropic forests. It's done for the sake of doing it; and we are granted a glimpse of it, just to show us perhaps that we are right to adore it, and to try in our clumsy way to make beautiful things too. That is why I envy the musician, because he creates beauty more directly then any other mind—and the best kind of poetry is of the same order."

"But isn't there a danger in all this?" said

Lestrange. "No, I don't want to say anything priggish," he added, seeing a contraction of Father Payne's brows; "I only want to say what I feel. I recognise the fascination of it as much as anyone can—but isn't it, as you said about travelling, a kind of intoxication? I mean, may it not be right to interpose it, but yet not right to follow it? Isn't it a selfish thing, and doesn't it do the very thing which you often speak against—blind us to other experience, that is?"

"Yes, there is something in that," said Father Payne. "Of course that is always the difficulty about the artist, that he appears to live selfishly in joy—but it applies to most things. The best you can do for the world is often to turn your back upon it. Philanthropy is a beautiful thing in its way, but it must be done by people who like it—it is useless if it is done in a grim and self-penalising way. If a man is really big enough to follow art, he had better follow it. I do not believe very much in the doctrine that service to be useful must be painful. No one doubts that Wordsworth gave more joy to humanity by living his own life than if he had been a country doctor. Of course the sad part of it is when a man follows art and does *not* succeed in giving pleasure. But you must risk that—and a real devotion to a thing gives the best chance of happiness to a man, and is perhaps, too, his best chance of giving something to others. There is no reason to think that Shakespeare was a philanthropist."

"But does that apply to things like horse-racing or golf?" said Rose.

"No, you must not pursue comfort," said Father

Payne; "but I don't believe in the theory that we have all got to set out to help other people. That implies that a man is aware of valuable things which he has to give away. Make friends if you can, love people if you can, but don't do it with a sense of duty. Do what is natural and beautiful and attractive to do. Make the little circle which surrounds you happy by sympathy and interest. Don't deal in advice. The only advice people take is that with which they agree. And have your own work. I think we are—many of us—afraid of enjoying work; but in any case, if we can show other people how to perceive and enjoy beauty, we have done a very great thing. The sense of beauty is growing in the world. Many people are desiring it, and religion doesn't cater for it, nor does duty cater for it. But it is the only way to make progress—and religion has got to find out how to include beauty in its programme, or it will be left stranded. Nothing but beauty ever lifted people higher—the unsensuous, inexplicable charm, which makes them ashamed of dull, ugly, greedy, quarrelsome ways. It is only by virtue of beauty that the world climbs higher—and if the world does climb higher by something which isn't obviously beautiful, it is only that we do not recognise it as beautiful. Sin and evil are signals from the unknown, of course; but they are danger signals, and we follow them with terror—but beauty is a signal too, and it is the signal made by peace and happiness and joy."

XXII

OF WAR

THE talk one evening turned on War; Lestrange said that he believed it was good for a nation to have a war: "It unites them with the sense of a common purpose, it evokes self-sacrifice, it makes them turn to God."

"Yes, yes," said Father Payne, rather impatiently. "But you can't personify a nation like that; that personification of societies and classes and sections of the human race does no end of harm. It is all a matter of statistics, not of generalisation. Take your three statements. 'It is good for a nation to have a war.' You mean, I suppose, that, in spite of the loss of the best stock and the disabling of strong young men, and the disintegration of families, and the hideous waste of time and money—subtracting all that—there is a balance of good to the survivors?"

"Yes, I think so," said Lestrange.

"But are you sure about this?" said Father Payne. "How do you know? Would you feel the same if you yourself were turned out a helpless invalid for life with your occupation gone? Are you sure that you are not only expressing the feeling of relief in the community at having a danger over? Is it more than the sense of gratitude of a man who has not suffered unbearably, to the people who *have* died and suffered? The only evidence worth having is that of the real sufferers. Take the case of the people who have died. You can't get evid-

ence from them. It is an assumption that they are content to have died. Is not the glory which surrounds them—and how short a time that lasts !—a human attempt to make consciences comfortable, and to relieve human doubts ? The worst of that theory is that it makes so light of the worth of life ; and, after all, a soldier's business is to kill and not to be killed ; while, generally speaking, the worst turn that a strong, healthy, and honest man can do to his country is to die prematurely. Of course war has a great and instinctive prestige about it ; are we not misled by that into accepting it as an inevitable business ? "

"No, I believe there is a real gain," said Lestrange, "in the national sense of unity, in the feeling of having been equal to an emergency."

"But are you speaking of a nation which conquers or a nation which is defeated ? " said Father Payne.

"Both," said Lestrange ; "it unites a nation in any case."

"But if a nation is defeated," said Father Payne, "are they the better for the common depression of *not* having been equal to the emergency ? "

"It may make them set their teeth," said Lestrange, "and prepare themselves better."

"Then it does not matter," said Father Payne, "whether they are united by the complacency of conquest or by the desire for revenge ? "

"I would not quite say that," said Lestrange. "But at all events a desire for revenge might teach them discipline."

"I can't believe that," said Father Payne ; "it seems to me to make all the difference what the purpose has been. I do not believe that a nation

gains by being united for a predatory and aggressive purpose. I think the victory of the Germans in the Franco-Prussian war has been wholly bad for them. It has made them believe in aggressiveness. A nation naturally philosophical and moral, and also both energetic and stupid, acquires the sense of a divine mission like that. I don't believe that a belief in your own methods of virtue is a wholesome belief. That seems to me likely to perpetuate war—and I suppose that we should all believe that war was an evil, if we could produce the good results of it without war."

We all agreed to this.

"I will grant," said Father Payne, "that if a nation which sincerely believes in peace and wishes to cultivate goodwill, is wantonly and aggressively attacked, and repels that attack, it may gain much from war if it sticks to its theory, does not attempt reprisals, and leaves the conquered bully in a position to see its mistake and regain its self-respect. But it is a very dangerous kind of success for all that. I do not believe that complacency ever does anything but harm. The purpose must be a good one in the first place, the cause must be a great one, and it must be honestly pursued to the end, if it is to help a nation. But it lets all sorts of old and evil passions loose, and it makes slaughter glorious. No, I believe that at best it is a relapse into barbarism. Hardly any nation is strong enough and great enough to profit either by conquest or by defeat."

"But what about the splendid self-sacrifice it all evokes?" said Lestrange. "People give up their comfort, their careers, they go to face the last risk—is that nothing?"

"No," said Father Payne; "it is a very magnificent and splendid thing,—I don't deny that. But even so, that can't be preserved artificially. I mean that no one would think that, if there were no chance of a real war, it would be a good thing to evoke such self-sacrifice by having manœuvres in which the best youth of the country were pitted against each other, to kill each other if possible. There must be a *real* cause behind it. No one would say it was a noble thing for the youth of a country to fling themselves down over a cliff or to infect themselves with leprosy to show that they could despise suffering and death. If it were possible to settle the differences between nations without war, war would be a wholly evil thing. The only thing that one can say is that while there exists a strong nation which believes enough in war to make war aggressively, other nations are bound to resist it. But the nation which believes in war is *ipso facto* an uncivilised nation."

"But does not a war," said Lestrange, "clear the air, and take people away from petty aims and trivial squabbles into a sterner and larger atmosphere?"

"Yes, I think it does," said Father Payne; "but a great pestilence might do that. We might be thankful for all the good we could get out of a pestilence, and be grateful for it; but we should never dream of artificially renewing it for that reason. I look upon war as a sort of pestilence, a contagion which spreads under certain conditions. But we disguise the evil of it from ourselves, if we allow ourselves to believe in its being intrinsically glorious. I can't believe that highway robbery

has only to be organised on a sufficiently large scale to make it glorious. A man who resists highway robbery, and runs the risk of death, because he wants to put a stop to it, seems to me a noble person—quite different from the man who sees a row going on and joins in it because he does not want to be out of a good thing! Do you remember the story of the Irishman who saw a fight proceeding, and rushed into the fray wielding his shillelagh, and praying that it might fall on the right heads? We have all of us uncivilised instincts, but it does not make them civilised to join with a million other people in indulging them. I think that a man who refuses to join from conviction, at the risk of being hooted as a coward, is probably doing a braver thing still."

"But I have often heard you say that life must be a battle," said Lestrange.

"Yes," said Father Payne, "but I know what I want to fight. I want the human race to join in fighting crime and disease, evil conditions of nurture, dishonesty and sensuality. I don't want to pit the finest stock of each country against each other. That is simple suicide, for two nations to kill off the men who could fight evil best. I want the nations to combine collectively for a good purpose, not to combine separately for a bad one."

"I see that," said Lestrange; "but I regard war as an inevitable element in society as at present constituted. I don't think the world can be persuaded out of it. If it ever ceases, it will die a natural death because it will suddenly be regarded as absurd. Meantime, I think it is our duty to regard the benefits of it; and, as I said, it turns a

nation to God—it takes them out of petty squabbles, and makes them recognise a power beyond and behind the world."

"Yes, that is so," said Father Payne, "if you regard war as caused by God. But I rather believe that it is one of the things that God is fighting against! And I don't agree that it produces a noble temper all through. It does in many of the combatants; but there is nothing so characteristic at the outbreak of war as the amount of bullying that is done. Peaceful people are hooted at and shouted down; thousands of general convictions are over-ridden; the violent have it their own way; it seems to me to organise the unruly and obstreperous, and to force all gentler and more civilised natures into an unconvinced silence. Many of the people who do most for the happiness of the world can't face unpopularity. They are apt to think that there must be something wrong with themselves, something spiritless and abnormal, if they find themselves loathing the cruelties of which others seem to approve. I do not believe that war organises wholesome and sane opinion; I believe that it silences it. It is a time when base, heartless, cruel people can become heroes. It is true that it also gives serene, courageous, and calm people a great opportunity. But on the whole it is a bad time for sober, orderly, and peaceable people. I believe that it evokes a good many fine qualities —simplicity, uncomplaining patience, unselfishness, but it reveals them rather than creates them. It shows the worth of a nation, but it should want a great deal of evidence before I believe that it does more than prove to people that they are braver

than they know. I can't believe vaguely in death and sorrow and disablement and waste being good things. It is merely a question of what you are paying so ghastly a price for. In the Napoleonic wars the price was paid for the liberties of Europe, to show a great nation that it must abandon the ideal of domination. That is a great cause; but it is great because men are evil, and not because they are good. War seems to me the temporary triumph of the old bad past over the finer and more beautiful future. Do not let us be taken in by the romance of it. That is the childish view, that loves the sight and sound of the marching column and the stirring music. People find it hard to believe that anything so strong and gallant and cheerful *can* have a sinister side. And no doubt for a young, strong, and bold man the excitement of it is an intense pleasure. But what we have to ask is whether we are right in taking so heavy a toll from the world for all that: I do not think it right, though it may be inevitable. But then I belong to the future, and I think I should be more at home in the world a thousand years hence than I am to-day."

"But I go back to my point," said Lestrange: "does not a great war like that send people to their knees in faith?"

"Depend upon it," said Father Payne, "that anything which makes people acquiesce in preventable evil, and see the beautiful effects of death and pain and waste, is the direct influence of the devil. It is the last and most guileful subtlety that he practises, to make us solemnly mournful and patient in the presence of calamities for which we have ourselves to thank. The only prayer worth

praying in the time of war is not, 'Help us to bear this,' but 'Help us to cure this'; and to behave with meek reverence is to behave like the old servant in *The Master of Ballantrae*, who bore himself like an afflicted saint under an illness, the root of which was drunkenness. The worst religion is that which keeps its sense of repentance alive by its own misdeeds!"

He was silent for a moment, and then he said: "No, we mustn't make terms with war, any more than we must do with cholera. It's a great, heart-breaking evil, and it puts everything back a stage. Of course it brings out fine qualities—I know that—and so does a plague of cholera. It's the evil in both that brings out the fine things to oppose it. But we ought to have more faith, and believe that the fine qualities are there—war doesn't create them, it only shows you that they are present—and we believe in war because it reassures us about the presence of the great qualities. It shows them, and then blows them out, like the flame of a candle. But we want to keep them; we don't want just to be shown them, with a risk of extinguishing them. Example can do something, but not half as much as inheritance; and we sweep away the inheritance for the sake of the romantic delight of seeing the great virtues flare up. No," he said, "war is one of the evil things that is trying to hurt mankind, and disguising itself in shining armour; but it means men ill; it is for ever trying to bring their dreams to an end."

XXIII

OF CADS AND PHARISEES

"THERE are only two sorts of people with whom it is impossible to live," said Father Payne one day, in a loud, mournful tone.

"Elderly women and young women, I suppose he means," said Rose softly.

"No," said Father Payne, "I protest! I adore sensible women, simple women, clever women, all non-predatory women—it is they who will not live with me. I forget they are not men, and they do not like that. And then they are so much more unselfish than men, that they have generally axes to grind, and I don't like that."

"Whom do you mean, then?" said I.

"Cads and Pharisees," said Father Payne, "and they are not two sorts really, but one. They are the people without imagination. It is that which destroys social life, the lack of imagination. The Pharisee is the cad with a tincture of Puritanism."

"What is the cad, then?" said I.

"Well," said Father Payne, "he is very easy to detect, and not very easy to define. He is the man who has got a perfectly definite idea of what he wants, and he suffers from isolation. He can't put himself into anyone's place, or get inside other people's minds. He is stupid, and he is unperceptive. He does not detect the little looks, gestures, tones of voice, which show when people are uncomfortable or disgusted. He is not uncomfortable or easily disgusted himself, and he does not much

mind other people being so. He says what he thinks, and you have got to lump it. Sometimes he is good-natured enough, and even brave. There is an admirable sketch of a good-natured cad in one of Mrs. Walford's novels, who is the acme of kind indelicacy. The cad is dreadful to live with, because he is always making one ashamed, and ashamed of being ashamed, because many of the things he does do not really matter very much. Then, when he is out of sight and hearing, you cannot trust him. He makes mischief, he throws mud. If he is vexed with you, he injures you with other people. We are all criticised behind our backs, of course, and we have all faults which amuse and interest our friends; and it is not caddish to criticise friends if one is only interested in them. But the cad is not interested, except in clearing other people out of his way. He is treacherous and spiteful. He drops in upon you uninvited, and then he tells people he could not get enough to eat. He repeats things you have said about your friends to the people of whom you have spoken, leaving out all the justifications, and says that he thinks they ought to know how you abuse them. He borrows money of you, and if you ask him for repayment, he says he is not accustomed to be dunned. He never can bring himself to apologise for anything, and if you lose your temper with him, he says you are getting testy in your old age. His one idea is to be formidable, and he says that he does not let people take liberties with him. He takes a mean and solitary view of the world, and other people are merely channels for his own wishes, or obstacles to them. The only way is to keep him at arm's

length, because he is not disarmed by any generosity or trustfulness; the discovery of caddishness in a man is the only excuse for breaking off a companionship. The worst of it is that cads are sometimes very clever, and don't let the caddishness appear till you are hooked. The mischief really is that the cad has no morals, no sense of social duty."

"What about Pharisees?" said I.

"Well, the Pharisee has too many morals," said Father Payne. "He is the person whose own tastes are a sort of standard. If you disagree with him, he thinks you must be wicked. If your tastes differ from his, they are of the nature of sin. You live under his displeasure. If he dresses for dinner, it is sloppy and middle-class not to do so. If he doesn't dress for dinner, the people who do are either wasting time or aping the manners of the great. He is always very strong about wasting time. If he likes gardening, he says it is the best sort of exercise; if he does not, he says that it is bilious work muddling about in a corner. Everything that he does is done on principle, but he uses his principles to bludgeon other people. If you make him the subject of a harmless jest, he says that he cannot bear personalities. You can please him only by deferring to him, and the only way to manage him is by gross flattery. A Pharisee can be a gentleman, and he isn't purely noxious like the cad; he is only unpleasant and discouraging. He is quite impervious to argument, and only says that he thought the principle he is contending for was generally accepted. The Pharisee wants in a heavy way to improve the world, and thinks meanly of it, while the cad thinks meanly of it, and wants to

exploit it. The Pharisee is a tyrant, and hates freedom; but you can often make a friend of him by asking him a favour, if you are also prepared to be subsequently reminded of the trouble he took to serve you.

"I think that the Pharisee perhaps does most harm in the end, because he hates all experiments. He does harm to the young, because he makes them dislike virtue and mistrust beauty. The cad does not corrupt—in fact, I think he rather improves people, because he is so ugly a case of what no one wishes to be—and it is better to hate people than to be frightened of them. If we got a cad and a Pharisee in here, for instance, it would be easier to get rid of the cad than the Pharisee."

"I begin to breathe more freely," said Vincent. "I had begun to review my conscience."

Father Payne laughed. "It's all blank cartridge," he said.

XXIV

OF CONTINUANCE

I WAS walking with Father Payne in the garden one day of spring. I think I liked him better when I was alone with him than I did when we were all together. His mind expanded more tenderly and simply—less epigrammatically. He spoke of this once to me, saying: "I am at my best when alone; even one companion deflects me. I find myself wishing to please him, pinching off roughnesses, perfuming truth, diplomatising. This ought not to be, of course; and if one was not thorny, self-

assertive, stupid, it would not be so; and every companion added makes me worse, because the strain of accommodation grows—I become vulgar and rough and boisterous in a large circle. I often feel: 'How these young men must be hating this gibbering and giggling ape, which after all is not really me!'" I tried to reassure him, but he shook his head, though with a smiling air. "Barthrop is not like that," he said, "the wise Barthrop! He is never suspicious or hasty—he does not think it necessary to affirm; yet you are never in any doubt what he thinks! He moves along like water, never anxious if he is held up or divided, creeping on as the land lies—that is the right way."

Presently he stopped, and looked long at some daffodil blades which were thrusting up in a sheltered place. "Look at the gray bloom on those blades," he said; "isn't that perfect? Fancy thinking of that—each of them so obviously the same thought taking shape, yet each of them different. Do not you see in them something calm, continuous, active—happy, in fact—at work; often tripped up and imprisoned, and thwarted—but moving on?" He was silent a little, and then he said: "This force of *life*—what a fascinating mystery it is—never dying, never ceasing, always coming back to shape itself into matter. I wonder sometimes it is not content to exist alone; but no, it is always back again, arranging matter, manipulating it into beautiful shapes and creatures, never discouraged; even when the plant falls ill and begins to pine away, the happy life is within it—languid perhaps, but just waiting for the release, till the cage in which it has imprisoned itself is opened,

and then—so I believe—back again in an instant somewhere else.

"I am inclined to believe," he went on, "that that is what we are all about; it seems to me the only explanation for the fact that we care so much about the past and the future. If we are creatures of a day, why should we be interested? The only reason we care about the past is because we ourselves were there in it; and we care about the future because we shall be there in it again."

"You mean a sort of re-incarnation," I said.

"That's an ugly word for a beautiful thing," he said. "But this love of life, this impulse to live, to protect ourselves, to keep ourselves alive, must surely mean that we have always lived and shall always live. Some people think that dreadful. They think it is taking liberties with them. If they are rich and comfortable and dignified, they cannot bear to think that they may have to begin again, perhaps as a baby in a slum—or they grow tired, and think they want rest; but we can't rest—we must live again, we must be back at work; and of course the real hope in it all is that, when we do anything to make the world happier, it is our own future that we are working for. Who could care about the future of the world, if he was to be banished from it for ever? I was reading a book the other day, in which a wise and a good man said that he felt about the future progress of the world as Moses did about the promised land, 'not as of something we want to have for ourselves, but as of something which we want to exist, whether we exist or no.' I can't take so impersonal a view! If one really believed that one was going to be extinguished

in death, one would care no more about the world's future than one cares where the passengers in a train are going to, when we get out at a station. Who, on arriving at home, can lose himself in wondering where his fellow-travellers have got to? We have better things to do than that! That is the sham altruism. It is as if a boy at school, instead of learning his own lesson, spent his time in imploring the other boys to learn theirs. That is what we are whipped for—for not learning our own lesson."

"But if all this is so," I said, "why don't we *know* that we shall live again? Why is the one thing which is important for us to know hidden from us?"

"I think we do know it," said Father Payne, "deep down in ourselves. It is why it is worth while to go on living. If we believed our reason, which tells us that we come to an end and sink into silence, we could not care to live, to suffer, to form passionate ties which must all be severed, only to sink into nothingness ourselves. If we will listen to our instincts, they assure us that it *is* all worth doing, because it all has a significance for us in the life that comes next."

"But if we are to go on living," I said, "are we to forget all the love and interest and delight of life? There seems no continuance of identity without memory."

"Oh," said Father Payne, "that is another delusion of reason. Our qualities remain—our power of being interested, of loving, of caring, of suffering. We practise them a little in one life, we practise them again in the next—that is why we improve.

I forget who it was who said it, but it is quite true, that there are numberless people now alive, who, because of their orderliness, their patience, their kindness, their sweetness, would have been adored as saints if they had lived in mediæval times. And that is the best reason we have for suppressing as far as we can our evil dispositions, and for living bravely and freely in happy energy, that we shall make a little better start next time. It is not the particular people we love who matter—it is the power of loving other people—and if we meet the same people as those we loved again, we shall love them again; and if we do not, why, there will be others to love. One of the worst limitations I feel is the fact that there are so many thousand people on earth whom I could love, if I could but meet them—and I am not going to believe that this wretched span of days is my only chance of meeting them. We need not be in a hurry—and yet we have no time to waste!"

He stopped for a moment, and then added: "When I lived in London, and was very poor, and had either too much or not enough to do, and was altogether very unhappy, I used to wander about the streets and wonder how I could be so much alone when there were so many possible friends. Just above Ludgate Railway Viaduct, as you go to St. Paul's, there is a church on your left, a Wren church, very plain, of white and blackened stone, and an odd lead spire at the top. It has hardly any ornament, but just over the central doorway, under a sort of pediment, there is a little childish angel's head, a beautiful little baby face, with such an expression of stifled bewilderment. It seems to

say, 'Why should I hang here, covered with soot, with this mob of people jostling along below, in all this noise and dirt?' The child looks as if it was just about to burst into tears. I used to feel like that. I used to feel that I was meant to be happy, and even to make people happy, and that I had been caught and pinned down in a sort of pillory. It's a grievous mistake to feel like that. Self-pity is the worst of all luxuries! But I think I owe all my happiness to that bad time. Coming here was like a resurrection; and I never grudged the time when I was face to face with a nasty, poky, useless life. And if that can happen inside a single existence, I am not going to despair about the possibility of its happening in many existences. I dreamed the other night that I saw a party of little angels singing a song together, all absorbed in making music, and I recognised the little child of Ludgate Hill in the middle of them singing loud and clear. He gave me a little smile and something like a wink, and I knew that he had got his promotion. We ought all of us, and always, to be expecting that. But we have got to earn it, of course. It does not come if we wait with folded hands."

XXV

OF PHILANTHROPY

FATHER PAYNE told us an odd story to-day of a big house on the outskirts of London, with a great garden and some fields belonging to it, that was shut up for years and seemed neglected. It was

inhabited by an old retired Colonel and his daughter: the daughter had become an invalid, and her mind was believed to be affected. No one ever came to the house or called there. A wall ran round it, and the trees grew thick and tangled within; the big gates were locked. Occasionally the Colonel came out of a side-door, a tall handsome man, and took a brisk walk; sometimes he would be seen handing his daughter, much wrapped up, into a carriage, and they drove together. But the place had a sinister air, and was altogether regarded with a gloomy curiosity.

When the Colonel died, it was discovered that the place was beautifully kept within, and the house delightfully furnished. It came out that, after a period of mental depression, the daughter had recovered her spirits, though her health was still delicate. The two were devoted to each other, and they decided that, instead of living an ordinary sociable life, they would just enjoy each other's society in peace. It had been the happiest life, simple, tenderly affectionate, the two living in and for each other, and one, moreover, of open-handed, secret benevolence. Apart from the expenses of the household, the Colonel's wealth had been used to support every kind of good work. Only one old friend of the Colonel's was in the secret, and he spoke of it as one of the most beautiful homes he had ever seen.

Someone of us criticised the story, and asked whether it was not a case of refined selfishness. He added rather incisively that the expenditure of money on charitable objects seemed to him to show that the Colonel's conscience was ill at ease.

Father Payne was very indignant. He said the world had gone mad on philanthropy and social service. Three-quarters of it was only fussy ambition. He went on to say that a beautiful and simple life was probably the thing most worth living in the world, and that two people could hardly be better employed than in making each other happy. He said that he did not believe in self-denial unless people liked it. Was it really a finer life to chatter at dinner-parties and tea-parties, and occasionally to inspect an orphanage? Perspiration was not the only evidence of godliness. Why, was it to be supposed that one could not live worthily unless one was always poking one's nose into one's neighbour's concerns? He said that you might as well say that it was refined selfishness to have a rose-tree in your garden, unless you cut off every bud the moment it appeared and sent it to a hospital. If the critic really believed what he said, Aveley was no place for him. Let him go to Chicago!

XXVI

OF FEAR

I FORGET what led up to the subject; perhaps I did not hear; but Father Payne said, "It isn't for nothing that 'the fearful' head the list of all the abominable people—murderers, sorcerers, idolaters, and liars—who are reserved for the lake of fire and brimstone! Fear is the one thing that we are always wrong in yielding to: I don't mean timidity and cowardice, but the sort of heavy, mild, and

rather pious sort of foreboding that wakes one up early in the morning, and that takes all the wind out of one's sails; fear of not being liked, of having given offence, of living uselessly, of wasting time and opportunities. Whatever we do, we must not lead an apologetic kind of life. If we on the whole intend to do something which we think may be wrong, it is better to do it—it is wrong to be cautious and prudent. I love experiments."

"Isn't that rather immoral?" said Lestrange.

"No, my dear boy," said Father Payne, "we must make mistakes: better make them! I am not speaking of things obviously wrong, cruel, unkind, ungenerous, spiteful things; but it is right to give oneself away, to yield to impulses, not to take advice too much, and not to calculate consequences too much. I hate the Robinson Crusoe method of balancing pros and cons. Live your own life, do what you are inclined to do, as long as you really do it. That is probably the best way of serving the world. Don't be argued into things, or bullied out of them. You need not parade it—but rebel silently. It is absolutely useless going about knocking people down. That proves nothing except that you are stronger. Don't show up people, or fight people; establish a stronger influence if you can, and make people see that it is happier and pleasanter to live as you live. Make them envy you—don't make them fear you. You must not play with fear, and you must not yield to fear."

XXVII

OF ARISTOCRACY

FATHER PAYNE came into the hall one morning after breakfast when I was opening a parcel of books which had arrived for me. It was a fine, sunny day, and the sun lit up the portrait framed in the panelling over the mantelpiece, an old and skilful copy (at least I suppose it was a copy) of Reynolds' fine portrait of James, tenth Earl of Shropshire. Father Payne regarded the picture earnestly. "Isn't he magnificent?" he said. "But he was a very poor creature really, and came to great grief. My great-great-grandfather! His granddaughter married my grandfather. Now look at that—that's the best we can do in the way of breeding! There's a man whose direct ancestors, father to son, had simply the best that money can buy—fine houses to live in, power, the pick of the matrimonial market, the best education, a fine tradition, every inducement to behave like a hero; and what did he do—he gambled away his inheritance, and died of drink and bad courses. We can't get what we want, it would seem, by breeding human beings, though we can do it with cows and pigs. Where and how does the thing go wrong? His father and mother were both of them admirable people—fine in every sense of the word.

"And then people talk, too, as if we had got rid of idolatry! We make a man a peer, we heap wealth upon him, and then we worship him for his magnificence, and are deeply affected if he talks

civilly to us. We don't do it quite so much now, perhaps—but in that man's day, think what an aroma of rank and splendour is cast, even in Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, over a dinner-party where a man like that was present! If he paid Johnson the most trumpery of compliments, Johnson bowed low, and down it went on Boswell's cuff! Yet we go on perpetuating it. We don't require that such a man should be active, public-spirited, wise. If he is fond of field-sports, fairly business-like, kindly, courteous, decently virtuous, we think him a great man, and feel mildly elated at meeting him and being spoken to civilly by him. I don't mean that only snobs feel that; but respectable people, who don't pursue fashion, would be more pleased if an Earl they knew turned up and asked for a cup of tea than if the worthiest of their neighbours did so. I don't exaggerate the power of rank—it doesn't make a man necessarily powerful now, but a very little ability, backed up by rank, will go a long way. A great general or a great statesman likes to be made an Earl; and yet a good many people would like an Earl of long descent quite as much. There are a lot of people about who feel as Melbourne did when he said he liked the Garter so much because there was no d——d merit about it. I believe we admire people who inherit magnificence better than we admire people who earn it; and while that feeling is there, what can be done to alter it?"

"I don't think I want to alter it," I said; "it is very picturesque!"

"Yes, there's the mischief," said Father Payne, "it *is* more picturesque, hang it all! The old

aristocrat who feels like a prince and behaves like one, *is* more picturesque than the person who has sweated himself into it. Think of the old Duke who was told he *must* retrench, and that he need not have six still-room maids in his establishment, and said, after a brief period of reflection, 'D——n it, a man must have a biscuit!' We *like* insolence! That is to say, we like it in its place, because we admire power. It's ten times more impressive than the meekness of the saint. The mischief is that we like anything from a man of power. If he is insolent, we think it grand; if he is stupid, we think it a sort of condescension; if he is mild and polite, we think it marvellous; if he is boorish, we think it is simple-minded. It is power that we admire, or rather success, and both can be inherited. If a man gets a big position in England, he is always said to grow into it; but that is because we care about the position more than we care about the man.

"When I was younger," he went on, "I used to like meeting successful people—it was only rarely that I got the chance—but I gradually discovered that they were not, on the whole, the interesting people. Sometimes they were, of course, when they were big animated men, full of vitality and interest. But many men use themselves up in attaining success, and haven't anything much to give you except their tired side. No, I soon found out that freshness was the interesting thing, wherever it was to be found—and, mind you, it isn't very common. Many people have to arrive at success by resolute self-limitation; and that becomes very uninteresting. Buoyancy, sympathy, quick interests,

perceptiveness—that's the supreme charm; and the worst of it is that it mostly belongs to the people who haven't taken too much out of themselves. When we have got a really well-ordered State, no one will have any reason to work too hard, and then we shall all be the happier. These gigantic toilers, it's a sort of morbidity, you know; the real success is to enjoy work, not to drudge yourself dry. One must overflow—not pump!"

"But what is an artist to do," I said, "who is simply haunted by the desire to make something beautiful?"

"He must hold his hand," said Father Payne; "he must learn to waste his time, and he must love wasting it. A habit of creative work is an awful thing."

"Come out for a turn," he went on; "never mind these rotten books; don't get into a habit of reading—it's like endlessly listening to good talk without ever joining in it—it makes a corpulent mind!"

We went and walked in the garden; he stopped before some giant hemlocks. "Just look at those great things," he said, "built up as geometrically as a cathedral, tier above tier, and yet not *quite* regular. There must be something very hard at work inside that, piling it all up, adding cell to cell, carrying out a plan, and enjoying it all. Yet the beauty of it is that it isn't perfectly regular. You see the underlying scheme, yet the separate shoots are not quite mechanical—they lean away from each other, that joint is a trifle shorter—there wasn't quite room at the start in that stem, and the pressure goes on showing right up to the top. I suppose

our lives would look very nearly as geometrical to anyone who *knew*—really knew; but how little geometrical we feel! I don't suppose this hemlock is cursed by the power of thinking it might have done otherwise, or envies the roses. We mustn't spend time in envying, or repenting either—or still less in renouncing life."

"But if I want to renounce it," I said, "why shouldn't I?"

"Yes, there you have me," said Father Payne; "we know so little about ourselves, that we don't always know whether we do better to renounce a thing or to seize it. Make experiments, I say—don't make habits."

"But you are always drilling me into habits," I said.

He gave me a little shake with his hand. "Yes, the habit of being able to do a thing," he said, "not the habit of being unable to do anything else! Hang these metaphysics, if that is what they are! What I want you young men to do is to get a firm hold upon life, and to feel that it is a finer thing than any little presentment of it. I want you to feel and enjoy for yourselves, and to live freely and generously. Bad things happen to all of us, of course; but we mustn't mind that—not to be petty or quarrelsome, or hidebound or prudish or over-particular, that's the point. To leave other people alone, except on the rare occasions when they are not letting other people alone; to be peaceable, and yet not to be afraid; not to be hurt and vexed; to practise forgetting; not to want to pouch things! It's all very well for me to talk," he said; "I made a sufficient hash of it, when I was

poor and miserable and overworked; and then I was transplanted out of a slum window-box into a sunny garden, just in time; yet I'm sure that most of my old troubles were in a way of my own making, because I hated being so insignificant; but I fear that was a little poison lurking in me from the Earls of Shropshire. That is the odd thing about ambitions, that they seem so often like regaining a lost position rather than making a new one. The truth is that we are caged; and the only thing to do is to think about the cage as little as we can."

XXVIII

OF CRYSTALS

ONE day I was strolling down the garden among the winding paths, when I came suddenly upon Father Payne, who was hurrying towards the house. He had in each of his hands a large roughly spherical stone, and looked at me a little shamefacedly.

"You look, Father," I said, "as if you were going to stone Stephen."

He laughed, and looked at the stones. "Yes," he said, "they are what the Greeks called 'hand-fillers,' for use in battle—but I have no nefarious designs."

"What are you going to do with them?" I said.

"That's a secret!" he said, and made as if he were going in. Then he said, "Come, you shall hear it—you shall share my secret, and be a partner in my dreams, as the fisherman says in Theocritus." But he did not tell me what he was going to do, and seemed half shy of doing so.

"It's like Dr. Johnson and the orange-peel," I said. "'Nay, Sir, you shall know their fate no further.'"

"Well, the truth is," he said at last, "that I'm a perfect baby. I never can resist looking into a hole in the ground, and I happened to look into the pit where we dig gravel. I can't tell you how long I spent there."

"What were you doing?" I said.

"Looking for fossils," he said; "I had a great gift for finding them when I was a child. I didn't find any fossils to-day, but I found these stones, and I think they contain crystals. I am going to break them and see."

I took one in my hand. "I think they are only fossil sponges," I said; "there will only be a rusty sort of core inside."

"You know that!" he said, brightening up; "you know about stones too? But these are not sponges—they would rattle if they were—no, they contain crystals—I am sure of it. Come and see!"

We went into the stable-yard. Father Payne fetched a hammer, and then selected a convenient place in the cobbled yard to break the stones. He put one of them in position, and aimed a blow at it, but it glanced off, and the stone flew off with the impact to some distance. "Lie still, can't you?" said Father Payne, apostrophising the stone, and adding, "This is for my pleasure, not for yours." I recovered the stone, and brought it back, and Father Payne broke it with a well-directed blow. He gathered up the pieces eagerly. "Yes," he said, "it's all right—they are blue crystals: better than I had hoped."

He handed a fragment to me to look at. The inside of the stone was hollow. It had a coagulated appearance, and was thickly coated with minute bluish crystals, very beautiful.

"I don't know that I ever saw a stone I liked as well as this," said Father Payne, musing over another piece. "Think what millions of years this has been like that,—before Abraham was! It has never seen the light of day before—it's a splash of some molten stone, which fell plop into a cool sea-current, I suppose. I wish I knew all about it. The question is, why is it so beautiful? It couldn't help it, I suppose! But for whose delight?" Then he said, "I suppose this was a vacuum in here till it was broken? That is why it is so clear and fresh. Good Heavens, what would I not give to know why this thing cooled into these lovely little shapes. It's no use talking about the laws of matter—why are the laws of matter what they are, and not different? And odder still, why do I like the look of it?"

"Perhaps that is a law of matter too," I said.

"Oh, shut up!" said Father Payne to me. "But I understand—and of course the temptation is to believe that this was all done on your account and mine. That is as odd a thing as the stone itself, if you come to think of it, that we should be made so that we refer everything to ourselves, and to believe that God prepared this pretty show for us."

"I suppose we come in somewhere?" I said.

"Yes, we are allowed to see it," said Father Payne. "But it wasn't arranged for the benefit of a silly old man like me. That is the worst of our religious theories—that we believe that God is for

ever making personal appeals to us. It is that sort of self-importance which spoils everything."

"But I can hardly believe that we have this sense of self-importance only to get rid of it," I said. "It all seems to me a dreadful muddle—to shut up these lovely little things inside millions of stones, and then to give us the wish to break a couple, only that we may reflect that they were not meant for us to see at all."

Father Payne gave a groan. "Yes, it is a muddle!" he said. "But one thing I feel clear about—that a beautiful thing like this means a sense of joy somewhere: some happiness went to the making of things which in a sense are quite useless, but are unutterably lovely all the same. Beauty implies consciousness—but come, we are neglecting our business. Give me the other stone at once!"

I gave it him, and he cracked it. "Very disappointing!" he said. "I made sure there was a beautiful stone, but it is all solid—only a flaky sort of jelly—it's no use at all!"

He threw it aside; but carefully gathered up the fragments of the crystalline stone. "Don't tell of me!" he said, looking at me whimsically. "This is the sort of nonsense which our sensible friends won't understand. But now that I know that you care about stones, we will have a rare hunt together one of these days. But mind—no stuff about geology! It's beauty that we are in search of, you and I."

XXIX

EARLY LIFE

ONE day, to my surprise and delight, Father Payne indulged in some personal reminiscences about his early life. He did not as a rule do this. He used to say that it was the surest sign of decadence to think much about the past. "Sometimes when I wake early," he said, "I find myself going back to my childhood, and living through scene after scene. It's not wholesome—I always know I am a little out of sorts when I do that—it is only one degree better than making plans about the future!"

However, on this occasion he was very communicative. He had been talking about Ruskin, and he said: "Do you remember in *Præterita* how Ruskin, writing about his sheltered and complacent childhood, describes how entirely he lived in the pleasure of *sight?* He noticed everything, the shapes and colours of things, the almond blossom, the ants that made nests in the garden walk, the things they saw in their travels. He was entirely absorbed in sense-impressions. Well, that threw a light on my own life, because it was exactly what happened to me as a child. I lived wholly in observation. I had no mind and very little heart. I suppose that I had so much to do looking at everything, getting the shapes and the textures and the qualities of everything by heart, that I had no time to think about ideas and emotions. I had a very lonely childhood, you know, brought up in the country by my mother, who was rather

an invalid, my father being dead. I had no companions to speak of, and I didn't care about anyone or need anyone—it was all simply a collecting of impressions. The result is that I can visualise anything and everything—speak of a larch-bud or a fir-cone, and there it is before me—the little rosy fragrant tuft, or the glossy rectangular squares of the cone. Then I went to Marlborough, and I was dreadfully unhappy. I hated everything and everybody—the ugliness and slovenliness of it all, the noise, the fuss, the stink. I did not feel I had anything in common with those little brutes, as I thought them. I lived the life of a blind creature in a fright, groping aimlessly about. I joined in nothing—but I was always strong, and so I was left alone. No one dared to interfere with me; and I have sometimes wished I hadn't been so strong, that I had had the experience of being weak. I dare say that nasty things might have happened—but I should have known more what the world was like, I should have depended more upon other people, I should have made friends. As it was, I left school entirely innocent, very solitary, very modest, thinking myself a complete duffer, and everyone else a beast. It got a little better at the end of my time, and I had a companion or two—but I never dreamed of telling anyone what I was really thinking about."

He broke off suddenly. "This is awful twaddle!" he said. "Why should you care to hear about all this? I was thinking aloud."

"Do go on thinking aloud a little," I said; "it is most interesting!"

"Ah," he said, "with the flatterers were busy

mockers! You enjoy staring and looking upon me."

"No, no," I said, rather nettled. "Father Payne, don't you understand? I want to hear more about you. I want to know how you came to be what you are: it interests me more than I can say. You asked me about myself when I came here, and I told you. Why shouldn't I ask you, for a change?"

He smiled, obviously pleased at this. "Why, then," he said, "I'll go on. I'm not above liking to tell my tale, like the Ancient Mariner. You can beat your breast when you are tired of it." He was intent for a moment, and then went on. "Well, I went up to Oxford—to Corpus. A funny little place, I now think—rather intellectual. I could hardly believe my senses when I found how different it was from school, and how independent. Heavens, how happy I was! I made some friends—I found I could make friends after all—I could say what I liked, I could argue, I could even amuse them. I really couldn't make you realise how I adored some of those men. I used to go to sleep after a long evening of chatter, simply hating the darkness which separated me from life and company. There were two in particular, very ordinary young men, I expect. But they were fond of me, and liked being with me, and I thought them the most wonderful and enchanting persons, with a wide knowledge of the great mysterious world. The world! It wasn't, I saw, a nasty, jostling place, as I had thought at school, but a great beautiful affair, full of love and delight, of interest and ideas. I read, I talked, I flew about—it was simply a new birth!

I felt like a prisoner suddenly released. Of course, the mischief was that I neglected my work. There wasn't time for that: and I fell in love, too, or thought I did, with the sister of one of those friends, with whom I went to stay. I wonder if anyone was ever in love like that! I daresay it's common enough. But I won't go into that; these raptures are for private consumption. I was roughly jerked up. I took a bad degree. My mother died—I had very little in common with her: she was an invalid without any hold on life, and I took no trouble to be kind to her—I was perfectly selfish and wilful. Then I had to earn my living. I would have given anything to stay at Oxford: and you know, even now, when I think of Oxford, a sort of electric shock goes through me, I love it so much. I daren't even set foot there, I'm so afraid of finding it altered. But when I think of those dark courts and bowery gardens, and the men moving about, and the fronts of blistered stone, and the little quaint streets, and the meadows and elms, and the country all about, I have a physical yearning that is almost a pain—a sort of home-sickness——"

He broke off, and was silent for a moment, and I saw that his eyes were full of tears.

"Then it was London, that accursed place! I had a tiny income: I got a job at a coaching establishment, I worked like the devil. That was a cruel time. I couldn't dream of marriage—that all vanished, and she married pretty soon. I couldn't get a holiday—I was too poor. I tried writing, but I made a hash of that. I simply went down into hell. One of my great friends died, and the other—well, it was awkward to meet, when I

had had to break it off with his sister. I simply can't describe to you how utterly horrible it all was. I used to teach all the terms, and in the vacations I simply mooned about. I hadn't a club, and I used to read at the Museum—read just to keep my senses. Then I suppose I got used to it. Of course, if I had had any adventurousness in me, I should have gone off and become a day-labourer or anything—but I am not that sort of person.

"That went on till I was about thirty-three—and then quite suddenly, and without any warning, I had my experience. I suppose that something was going on inside me all the time, something being burnt out of me in those fires. It was a mixture of selfishness and stupidity and perverseness that was the matter with me. I didn't see that I could do anything. I was simply furious with the world for being such a hole, and with God for sticking me in the middle of it. The occasion of the change was simply too ridiculous. It was nothing else but coming back to my rooms and finding a big bowl of daffodils there. They had been left, my landlady told me, by a young gentleman. It sounds foolish enough—but it suddenly occurred to me to think that someone was interested in me, pitied me, cared for me. A sort of mist cleared away from my eyes, and I saw in a flash what was the mischief—that I had walled myself in by my misery and bad temper, and by my expectation that something must be done for me. The next day I had to take a lot of pupils, one after another, for composition. One of them had a daffodil in his hand, which he put down carelessly on the table.

I stared at it and at him, and he blushed. He wasn't an interesting young man to look at or to talk to—but it was just a bit of simple humanity. It all came out. I had been good to him—I looked as if I were having a bad time. It was just a little human signal, and a beautiful one. It was there, then, all the time, I saw—human affection—if I cared to put out my hand for it. I can't describe to you how it all developed, but my heart had melted somehow—thawed like a lump of ice. I saw that there was no specific ill-will to me in the world. I saw that everything was there, if I only chose to take it. That was my second awakening—a glimmer of light through a chink—and suddenly, it was day! I had been growling over bones and straw in a filthy kennel, and I was not really tied up at all. Life was running past me, a crystal river. I was dying of thirst: and all because it was not given me in a clean glass on a silver tray, I would not drink it—and God smiling at me all the time."

Father Payne walked on in silence.

"The truth is, my boy," he said a minute later, "that I'm a converted man, and it isn't everyone who can say that—nor do I wish everyone to be converted, because it's a ghastly business preparing for the operation. It isn't everyone who needs it—only those self-willed, devilish, stand-off, proud people, who have to be braised in a mortar and pulverised to atoms. Then, when you are all to bits, you can be built up. Do you remember that stone we broke the other day? Well, I was a melted blob of stone, and then I was crystallised—now I'm full of eyes within! And the best of it is

that they are little living eyes, and not sparkling flints—they see, they don't reflect! At least I think so; and I don't think trouble is brewing for me again—though that is always the danger!"

I was very deeply moved by this, and said something about being grateful.

"Oh, not that," said Father Payne; "you don't know what fun it has been to me to tell you. That's the sort of thing that I want to get into one of my novels, but I can't manage it. But the moral is, if I may say so: Be afraid of self-pity and dignity and self-respect—don't be afraid of happiness and simplicity and kindness. Give yourself away with both hands. It's easy for me to talk, because I have been loaded with presents ever since: the clouds drop fatness—a rich but expressive image that!"

XXX

OF BLOODSUCKERS

"I'M feeling low to-night," said Father Payne in answer to a question about his prolonged silence. "I'm not myself: virtue has gone out of me—I'm in the clutches of a bloodsucker."

"Old debts with compound interest?" said Rose cheerfully.

"Yes," said Father Payne with a frown; "old emotional I.O.U.'s. I didn't know what I was putting my name to."

"A man or a woman?" said Rose.

"Thank God, it's a man!" said Father Payne. "Female bloodsuckers are worse still. A man, at

all events, only wants the blood; a woman wants the pleasure of seeing you wince as well!"

"It sounds very tragic," said Kaye.

"No, it's not tragic," said Father Payne; "there would be something dignified about that! It's only unutterably low and degrading. Come, I'll tell you about it. It will do me good to get it off my chest.

"It is one of my old pupils," Father Payne went on. "He once got into trouble about money, and I paid his debts—he can't forgive me that!"

"Does he want you to pay some more?" said Rose.

"Yes, he does," said Father Payne, "but he wants to be high-minded too. He wants me to press him to take the money, to prevail upon him to accept it as a favour. He implies that if I hadn't begun by paying his debts originally, he would not have ever acquired what he calls 'the unhappy habit of dependence.' Of course he doesn't think that really: he wants the money, but he also wants to feel dignified. 'If I thought it would make you happier if I accepted it,' he says, 'of course I should view the matter differently. It would give me a reason for accepting what I must confess would be a humiliation.' Isn't that infernal? Then he says that I may perhaps think that his troubles have coarsened him, but that he unhappily retains all his old sensitiveness. Then he goes on to say that it was I who encouraged him to preserve a high standard of delicacy in these matters."

"He must be a precious rascal," said Vincent.

"No, he isn't," said Father Payne, "that's the

worst of it—but he is a frantic poseur. He has got so used to talking and thinking about his feelings, that he doesn't know what he really does feel. That's the part of it which bothers me: because if he was a mere hypocrite, I would say so plainly. One must not be taken in by apparent hypocrisy. It often represents what a man did once really think, but which has become a mere memory. One must not be hard on people's reminiscences. Don't you know how the mildest people are often disposed to make out that they were reckless and daring scapegraces at school? That isn't a lie; it is imagination working on very slender materials."

We laughed at this, and then Barthrop said, "Let me write to him, Father. I won't be offensive."

"I know you wouldn't," said Father Payne; "but no one can help me. It's not my fault, but my misfortune. It all comes of acting for the best. I ought to have paid his debts, and made myself thoroughly unpleasant about it. What I did was to be indulgent and sympathetic. It's all that accursed sentimentality that does it. I have been trying to write a letter to him all the morning, showing him up to himself without being brutal. But he will only write back and say that I have made him miserable, and that I have wholly misunderstood him: and then I shall explain and apologise; and then he will take the money to show that he forgives me. I see a horrible vista of correspondence ahead. After four or five letters, I shall not have the remotest idea what it is all about, and he will be full of reproaches. He will say that it isn't the first time that he has found

how the increase of wealth makes people ungenerous. Oh, don't I know every step of the way! He is going to have the money, and he is going to put me in the wrong: that is his plan, and it is going to come off. I shall be in the wrong: I feel in the wrong already!"

"Then in that case there is certainly no necessity for losing the money *too*!" said Rose.

"It's all very well for you to talk in that impersonal way, Rose," said Father Payne. "Of course I know very well that you would handle the situation kindly and decisively; but you don't know what it is to suffer from politeness like a disease. I have done nothing wrong except that I have been polite when I might have been dry. I see right through the man, but he is absolutely impervious; and it is my accursed politeness that makes it impossible for me to say bluntly what I know he will dislike and what he genuinely will not understand. I know what you are thinking, every one of you—that I say lots of things that you dislike—but then you *do* understand! I could no more tell this wretch the truth than I could trample on a blind old man."

"What will you really do?" said Barthrop.

"I shall send him the money," said Father Payne firmly, "and I shall compliment him on his delicacy; and then, thank God, I shall forget, until it all begins again. I am a wretched old opportunist, of course; a sort of Ally Sloper—not fit company for strong and concise young men!"

XXXI

OF INSTINCTS

I DO not remember what led to this remark of Father Payne's:—"It's a painful fact, from the ethical point of view, that qualities are more admired, and more beautiful indeed, the more instinctive they are. We don't admire the faculty of taking pains very much. The industrious boy at school is rather disliked than otherwise, while the brilliant boy who can construe his lesson without learning it is envied. Take a virtue like courage: the love of danger, the contempt of fear, the power of dashing headlong into a thing without calculating the consequences is the kind of courage we admire. The person who is timid and anxious, and yet just manages desperately to screw himself up to the sticking-point, does not get nearly as much credit as the bold devil-may-care person. It is so with most performances; we admire ease and rapidity much more than perseverance and tenacity, what obviously costs little effort rather than what costs a great deal.

"We all rather tend to be bored by a display of regularity and discipline. Do you remember that letter of Keats, where he confesses his intense irritation at the way in which his walking companion, Brown, I think, always in the evening got out his writing-materials in the same order—first the paper, then the ink, then the pen. 'I say to him,' says Keats, 'why not the pen sometimes first?' We don't like precision; look at the word 'Methodist,'

which originally was a nick-name for people of strictly disciplined life. We like something a little more gay and inconsequent.

"Yet the power of forcing oneself by an act of will to do something unpleasant is one of the finest qualities in the world. There is a story of a man who became a Bishop. He was a delicate and sensitive fellow, much affected by a crowd, and particularly by the sight of people passing in front of him. He began his work by holding an enormous confirmation, and five times in the course of it he actually had to retire to the vestry, where he was physically sick. That's a heroic performance; but we admire still more a bland and cheerful Bishop who is not sick, but enjoys a ceremony."

"Surely that is all right, Father Payne?" said Barthrop. "When we see a performance, we are concerned with appreciating the merit of it. A man with a bad headache, however gallant, is not likely to talk as well as a man in perfect health and high spirits; but if we are not considering the performance, but the virtues of the performer, we might admire the man who pumped up talk when he was feeling wretched more than the man from whom it flowed."

"The judicious Barthrop!" said Father Payne. "Yes, you are right—but for all that we do not instinctively admire effort as much as we admire easy brilliance. We are much more inclined to imitate the brilliant man than we are to imitate the man who has painfully developed an accomplishment. The truth is, we are all of us afraid of effort; and instinct is generally so much more in the right than reason, that I end by believing that it is better to

live freely in our good qualities, than painfully to conquer our bad qualities; not to take up work that we can't do from a sense of duty, but to take up work that we can do from a sense of pleasure. I believe in finding our real life more than in sticking to one that is not real for the sake of virtue. Trained inclination is the secret. That is why I should never make a soldier. I love being in a rage—no one more—it has all the advantages and none of the disadvantages of getting drunk. But I can't do it on the word of command."

"Isn't that what is called hedonism?" said Lestrange.

"You must not get in the way of calling names!" said Father Payne; "hedonism is a word invented by Puritans to discourage the children of light. It is not a question of doing what you like, but of liking what you do. Of course everyone has got to choose—you can't gratify all your impulses, because they thwart each other; but if you freely gratify your finer impulses, you will have much less temptation to indulge your baser inclinations. It is more important to have the steam up and to use the brake occasionally, than never to have the steam up at all."

XXXII

OF HUMILITY

We had been listening to a paper by Kaye—a beautiful and fanciful piece of work; when he finished, Father Payne said: "That's a charming

thing, Kaye—a little sticky in places, but still beautiful."

"It's not so good as I had hoped," said Kaye mildly.

"Oh, don't be humble," said Father Payne; "that's the basest of the virtues, because it vanishes the moment you realise it! Make your bow like a man. It may not be as good as you hoped—nothing ever is—but surely it is better than you expected?"

Kaye blushed, and said, "Well, yes, it is."

"Now let me say generally," said Father Payne, "that in art you ought never to undervalue your own work. You ought all to be able to recognise how far you have done what you intended. The big men, like Tennyson and Morris, were always quite prepared to praise their own work. They did it quite modestly, more as if some piece of good fortune had befallen them than as if they deserved credit. There's no such thing as taking credit to oneself in art. What you try to do is always bound to be miles ahead of what you can do—that is where the humility comes in. But a man who can't admire his own work on occasions, can't admire anyone's work. If you do a really good thing, you ought to feel as if you had been digging for diamonds and had found a big one. Hang it, you *intend* to make a fine thing! You are not likely to be conceited about it, because you can't make a beautiful thing every day; and the humiliation comes in when, after turning out a good thing, you find yourself turning out a row of bad ones. The only artists who are conceited are those who can't distinguish between what is good and what is inferior in their

own work. You must not expect much praise, and least of all from other artists, because no artist is ever very deeply interested in another artist's work, except in the work of the two or three who can do easily what he is trying to do. But it is a deep pleasure, which may be frankly enjoyed, to turn out a fine bit of work; though you must not waste much time over enjoying it, because you have got to go on to the next."

"I always think it must be very awful," said Vincent, "when it dawns upon a man that his mind is getting stiff and his faculty uncertain, and that he is not doing good work any more. What ought people to do about stopping?"

"It's very hard to say," said Father Payne. "The happiest thing of all is, I expect, to die before that comes; and the next best thing is to know when to stop and to want to stop. But many people get a habit of work, and fall into dreariness without it."

"Isn't it better to go on with the delusion that you are just as good as ever—like Wordsworth and Browning?" said Rose.

"No, I don't think that is better," said Father Payne, "because it means a sort of blindness. It is very curious in the case of Browning, because he learned exactly how to do things. He had his method, he fixed upon an abnormal personality or a curious incident, and he turned it inside out with perfect fidelity. But after a certain time in his life, the thing became suddenly heavy and uninteresting. Something evaporated—I do not know what! The trick is done just as deftly, but one is bored; one simply doesn't care to see the inside of a new person,

however well dissected. There's no life, no beauty about the later things. Wordsworth is somehow different—he is always rather noble and prophetic. The later poems are not beautiful, but they issue from a beautiful idea—a passion of some kind. But the later Browning poems are not passionate—they remind one of a surgeon tucking up his sleeves for a set of operations. I expect that Browning was too humble; he loved a gentlemanly convention, and Wordsworth certainly did not do that. If you want to know how a poet should *live*, read Dorothy Wordsworth's journals at Grasmere; if you want to know how he should *feel*, read the letters of Keats."

XXXIII

OF MEEKNESS

I HAD been having some work looked over by Father Payne, who had been somewhat trenchant. "You have been beating a broken drum, you know," he had said, with a smile.

"Yes," I said. "It's poor stuff, I see. But I didn't know it was so bad when I wrote it; I thought I was making the best of a poor subject rather ingeniously. I am afraid I am rather stupid."

"If I thought you really felt like that," said Father Payne, "I should be sorry for you. But I expect it is only your idea of modesty?"

"No," I said, "it isn't modesty—it's humility, I think."

"No one has any business to think himself humble," said Father Payne. "The moment you

do that, you are conceited. It's not a virtue to grovel. A man ought to know exactly what he is worth. You needn't be always saying what you are worth, of course. It's modest to hold your tongue. But humility is, or ought to be, extinct as a virtue. It belongs to the time when people felt bound to deplore the corruption of their heart, and to speak of themselves as worms, and to compare themselves despondently with God. That in itself is a piece of insolence; and it isn't a wholesome frame of mind to dwell on one's worthlessness, and to speak of one's righteousness as filthy rags. It removes every stimulus to effort. If you really feel like that, you had better take to your bed permanently—you will do less harm there than pretending to do work in the value of which you don't believe."

"But what is the word for the feeling which one has when one reads a really splendid book, let us say, or hears a perfect piece of music?" I said.

"Well, it ought to be gratitude and admiration," said Father Payne. "Why mix yourself up with it at all?"

"Because I can't help it," I said; "I think of the way in which I muddle on with my writing, and I feel how hopeless I am."

"That's all wrong, my boy," said Father Payne; "you ought to say to yourself—'So that is *his* way of putting things and, by Jove, it's superb. Now I've got to find my way of putting things!' You had better go and work in the fields like an honest man, if you don't feel you have got anything to say worth saying. You have your own point of view, you know: try and get it down on paper. It isn't exactly the same as, let us say, Shakespeare's

point of view: but if you feel that he has seen everything worth seeing, and said everything worth saying, then, of course, it is no good going on. But that is pure grovelling; no lively person ever does feel that—he says, 'Hang it, he has left *some* things out!' After all, everyone has a right to his point of view, and if it can be expressed, why, it is worth expressing. We want all the sidelights we can get."

"That's one comfort!" I said.

"Yes," said Father Payne, "but you know perfectly well that you knew it before I told you. Why be so undignified? You need not want to astonish or amuse the whole civilised world. You probably won't do that; but you can fit a bit of the mosaic in, if you have it in you. Now look you here! I know exactly what I am worth. I can't write—though I think I can when I'm at it—but I can perceive, and see when a thing is amiss, and lay my finger on a fault; I can be of some use to a fellow like yourself—and I can manage an estate in my own way, and I can keep my tenants' spirits up. I have got a perfectly definite use in the world, and I'm going to play my part for all that I'm worth. I'm not going to pretend that I am a worm or an outcast—I don't feel one; and I am as sure as I can be of anything, that God does not wish me to feel one. He needs me; He can't get on without me just here; and when He can, He will say the word. I don't think I am of any far-reaching significance: but neither am I going to say that I am nothing but vile earth and a miserable sinner. I'm lazy, I'm cross, I'm unkind, I'm greedy: but I know when I am wasting time and temper, and I don't do it all the time. It's no use being abject.

The mistake is to go about comparing yourself with other people and weighing yourself against them. The right thing to do is to be able to recognise generously and desirously when you see anyone doing something finely which you do badly, and to say, 'Come, that's the right way! I must do better.' But to be humble is to be grubby, because it makes one proud, in a nasty sort of way, of doing things badly. 'What a poor creature I am,' says the humble man, 'and how nice to know that I am so poor a creature; how noble and unworldly I am.' The mistake is to want to do a thing better than Smith or Jones: the right way is to want to do it better than yourself."

"Yes," I said, "that's perfectly true, Father: and I won't be such a fool again."

"You haven't been a fool, so far as I am aware," said Father Payne. "It is only that you are just a thought too polite. You mustn't be polite in mind, you know—only in manners. Politeness only consists in not saying all you think unless you are asked. But humility consists in trying to believe that you *think* less than you think. It's like holding your nose, and saying that the bad smell has gone—it is playing tricks with your mind: and if you get into the way of doing that, you will find that your mind has a nasty way of playing tricks upon you. Here! hold on! I am rapidly becoming like Chadband! Send me Vincent, will you—there's a good man? He comes next."

XXXIV

OF CRITICISM

FATHER PAYNE had told me that my writing was becoming too juicy and too highly-scented. "You mustn't hide the underlying form," he said; "have plenty of plain spaces. This sort of writing is only for readers who want to be vaguely soothed and made to feel comfortable by a book—it's a stimulant, it's not a food!"

"Yes," I said with a sigh, "I suppose you are right."

"Up to a certain point, I am right," he replied, "because you are in training at present—and people in training have to do abnormal things: you can't *live* as if you were in training, of course; but when you begin to work on your own account, you must find your own pace and your own manner: and even now you needn't agree with me unless you like."

I determined, however, that I would give him something very different next time. He suggested that I should write an essay on a certain writer of fiction. I read the novels with great care, and I then produced the driest and most technical criticism I could. I read it aloud to Father Payne a month later. He heard it in silence, stroking his beard with his left hand, as his manner was. When I had finished, he said: "Well, you have taken my advice with a vengeance; and as an exercise—indeed, as a *tour-de-force*—it is good. I didn't think you had it in you to produce such a bit of anatomy. I think it's simply the most uninteresting essay I ever

heard in my life—chip, chip, chip, the whole time. It won't do you any harm to have written it, but, of course, it's a mere caricature. No conceivable reason could be assigned for your writing it. It's like the burial of the dead—ashes to ashes, dust to dust!"

"I admit," I said, "that I did it on purpose, to show you how judicious I could be."

"Oh yes," he said, "I quite realise that—and that's why I admire it. If you had produced it as a real thing, and not by way of reprisal, I should think very ill of your prospects. It's like the work of an analytical chemist—I tell you what it's like, it's like the diagnosis of the symptoms of some sick person of rank in a doctor's case-book! But, of course, you know you mustn't write like that, as well as I do. There must be some motive for writing, some touch of admiration and sympathy, something you can show to other people which might escape them, and which is worth while for them to see. In writing—at present, at all events—one can't be so desperately scientific and technical as all that. I suppose that some day, when we treat human thought and psychology scientifically, we shall have to dissect like that; but even so, it will be in the interests of science, not in the interests of literature. One must not confuse the two, and no doubt, when we begin to analyse the development of human thought, its heredity, its genesis and growth, we shall have a Shelley-culture in a test-tube, and we shall be able to isolate a Browning-germ: but we haven't got there yet."

"In that case," I said, "I don't really see what was so wrong with my last essay."

"Why, it was a mere extemporisation," said Father Payne; "a phrase suggested a phrase, a word evoked a lot of other words—there was no real connection of thought. It was pretty enough, but you were not even roving from one place to another, you were just drifting with the stream. Now this last essay is purely business-like. You have analysed the points—but there's no beauty or pleasure in it. It is simply what an engineer might say to an engineer about the building of a bridge. Mind, I am not finding fault with your essay. You did what you set out to do, and you have done it well. I only say there is not any conceivable reason why it should have been written, and there is every conceivable reason why it should not be read."

"It was just an attempt," I said, "to see the points and to disentangle them."

"Yes, yes," said Father Payne; "I see that, and I give you full credit for it. But, after all, you must look on writing as a species of human communication. The one reason for writing is that the writer sees something which other people overlook, perceives the beauty and interest of it, gets behind it, sees the quality of it, and how it differs from other similar things. If the writer is worth anything, his subject must be so interesting or curious or beautiful to himself that he can't help setting it down. The motive of it all must be the fact that he is interested—not the hope of interesting other people. You must risk that, though the more you are interested, the better is your chance of interesting others. Then the next point is that things mustn't be presented in a cold and abstract light—you have done

that here—it must be done as you see it, not as a photographic plate records it: and that is where the personality of the artist comes in, and where writers are handicapped, according as they have or have not a personal charm. That is the unsolved mystery of writing—the personal charm: apart from that there is little in it. A man may see a thing with hideous distinctness, but he may not be able to invest it with charm: and the danger of charm is that some people can invest very shallow, muddled, and shabby thinking with a sort of charm. It is like a cloak, if I may say so. If I wear an old cloak, it looks shabby and disgraceful, as it is. But if I lend it to a shapely and well-made friend, it gets a beauty from the wearer. There are men I know who can tell me a story as old as the hills, and yet make it fresh and attractive. Look at that delicious farrago of nonsense and absurdity, Ruskin's *Fors Clavigera*. He crammed in anything that came into his head—his reminiscences, scraps out of old dreary books he had read, paragraphs snipped out of the papers. There's no order, no sequence about it, and yet it is irresistible. But then Ruskin had the charm, and managed to pour it into all that he wrote. He is always *there*, that whimsical, generous, perverse, affectionate, afflicted, pathetic creature, even in the smallest scrap of a letter or the dreariest old tag of quotation. But you and I can't play tricks like that. You are sometimes there, I confess, in what you write, while I am never there in anything that I write. What I want to teach you to do is to be really yourself in all that you write."

"But isn't it apt to be very tiresome," said I, "if the writer is always obtruding himself?"

"Yes, if he obtrudes himself, of course he is tiresome," said Father Payne. "But look at Ruskin again. I imagine, from all that I read about him, that if he was present at a gathering, he was the one person whom everyone wanted to hear. If he was sulky or silent, it was everyone's concern to smoothe him down—if *only* he would talk. What you must learn to do is to give exactly as much of yourself as people want. But it must be a transfusion of yourself, not a presentment. I don't imagine that Ruskin always talked about himself—he talked about what interested him, and because he saw five times as much as anyone else saw in a picture, and about three times as much as was ever there, it was fascinating: but the primary charm was in Ruskin himself. Don't you know the curious delight of seeing a house once inhabited by anyone whom one has much admired and loved? However dull and commonplace it is, you keep on saying to yourself, 'That was what his eyes rested on, those were the books he handled; how could he bear to have such curtains, how could he endure that wall-paper?' The most hideous things become interesting, because he tolerated them. In writing, all depends upon how much of what is interesting, original, emphatic, charming in yourself you can communicate to what you are writing. It has got to *live;* that is the secret of the commonplace and even absurd books which reviewers treat with contempt, and readers buy in thousands. They have *life!*"

"But that is very far from being art, isn't it?" I said.

"Of course!" said Father Payne, "but the use

of art, as I understand it, is just that—that all you present shall have life, and that you should learn not to present what has not got life. Why I objected to your last essay was because you were not alive in it: you were just echoing and repeating things: you seemed to me to be talking in your sleep. Why I object to this essay is that you are too wide awake—you are just talking shop."

"I confess I rather despair," I said.

"What rubbish!" said Father Payne; "all I want you to do is to *live* in your ideas—make them your own, don't just slop them down without having understood or felt them. I'll tell you what you shall do next. You shall just put aside all this dreary collection of formulæ and scalpel-work, and you shall write me an essay on the whole subject, saying the best that you feel about it all, not the worst that a stiff intelligence can extract from it. Don't be pettish about it! I assure you I respect your talent very much. I didn't think it was in you to produce anything so loathsomely judicious."

XXXV

OF THE SENSE OF BEAUTY

THERE had been some vague ethical discussion during dinner in which Father Payne had not intervened; but he suddenly joined in briskly, though I don't remember who or what struck the spark out. "You are running logic too hard," he said; "the difficulty with all morality is not to know where it is to begin, but where it is to stop."

"I didn't know it had to stop," said Vincent; "I thought it had to go on."

"Yes, but not as morality," said Father Payne; "as instinct and feeling—only very elementary people indeed obey rules, *because* they are rules. The righteous man obeys them because on the whole he agrees with them."

"But in one sense it isn't possible to be too good?" said Vincent.

"No," said Father Payne, "not if you are sure what good is—but it is quite easy to be too righteous, to have too many rules and scruples—not to live your own life at all, but an anxious, timid, broken-winged sort of life, like some of the fearful saints in the *Pilgrim's Progress*, who got no fun out of the business at all. Don't you remember what Mr. Feeblemind says? I can't quote—it's a glorious passage."

Barthrop slipped out and fetched a *Pilgrim's Progress*, which he put over Father Payne's shoulder. "Thank you, old man," said Father Payne, "that's very kind of you—that is morality translated into feeling!"

He turned over the pages, and read the bit in his resonant voice:

"'I am, as I said, a man of a weak and feeble mind, and shall be offended and made weak at that which others can bear. I shall like no Laughing: I shall like no gay Attire: I shall like no unprofitable Questions. Nay, I am so weak a man, as to be offended with that which others have a liberty to do. I do not know all the truth: I am a very ignorant Christian man; sometimes, if I hear some rejoice in the Lord, it troubles me, because I cannot do so too.'"

"There," he said, "that's very good writing, you know—full of freshness—but you are not meant to admire the poor soul: *that's* not the way to go on pilgrimage! There is something wrong with a man's religion, if it leaves him in that state. I don't mean that to be happy is always a sign of grace—it often is simply a lack of sympathy and imagination; but to be as good as Mr. Feeblemind, and at the same time as unhappy, is a clear sign that something is wrong. He is like a dog that *will* try to get through a narrow gap with a stick in his mouth—he can't make out why he can't do his duty and bring the stick—it catches on both sides, and won't let him through. He knows it is his business to bring the thing back at once, but he is prevented in some mysterious way. It doesn't occur to him to put the stick down, get through himself, and then pull it through by the end. That is why our duty is often so hard, because we think we ought to do it simply and directly, when it really wants a little adjusting—we regard the momentary precept, not the ultimate principle."

"But what is to tell us where to draw the line," said Vincent, "and when to disregard the precept?"

"Ah," said Father Payne, "that's my great discovery, which no one else will ever recognise—that is where the sense of beauty comes in!"

"I don't see that the sense of beauty has anything to do with morality," said Vincent.

"Ah, but that is because you are at heart a Puritan," said Father Payne; "and the mistake of all Puritans is to disregard the sense of beauty—all the really great saints have felt about morality as an artist feels about beauty. They don't do good

things because they are told to do them, but because they feel them to be beautiful, splendid, attractive; and they avoid having anything to do with evil things, because such things are ugly and repellent."

"But when you have to do a thoroughly disagreeable thing," said Vincent, "there often isn't anything beautiful about it either way. I'll give you a small instance. Some months ago I had been engaged for a fortnight to go to a thoroughly dull dinner-party with some dreary relations of mine, and a man asked me to come and dine at his club and meet George Meredith, whom I would have given simply anything to meet. Of course I couldn't do it—I had to go on with the other thing. I had to do what I hated, without the smallest hope of being anything but fearfully bored: and I had to give up doing what would have interested me more than anything in the world. Of course, that is only a small instance, but it will suffice."

"It all depends on how you behaved at your dinner-party when you got there," said Father Payne, smiling; "were you sulky and cross, or were you civil and decent?"

"I don't know," said Vincent; "I expect I was pretty much as usual. After all, it wasn't their fault!"

"You are all right, my boy," said Father Payne; "you have got the sense of beauty right enough, though you probably call it by some uncomfortable name. I won't make you blush by praising you, but I give you a good mark for the whole affair. If you had excused yourself, or asked to be let off, or told a lie, it would have been ugly. What you did was in the best taste: and that is what I mean.

The ugly thing is to clutch and hold on. You did more for yourself by being polite and honest than even George Meredith could have done for you. What I mean by the sense of beauty, as applied to morality, is that a man must be a gentleman first, and a moralist afterwards, if he can. It is grabbing at your own sense of righteousness, if you use it to hurt other people. Your own complacency of conscience is not as important as the duty of not making other people uncomfortable. Of course there are occasions when it is right to stand up to a moral bully, and then you may go for him for all you are worth: but these cases are rare; and what you must not do is to get into the way of a sort of moral skirmishing. In ordinary life, people draw their lines in slightly different places according to preference: you must allow for temperament. You mustn't interfere with other people's codes, unless you are prepared to be interfered with. It is impossible to be severely logical. Take a thing like the use of money: it is good to be generous, but you mustn't give away what you can't afford, because then your friends have to pay your bills. What everyone needs is something to tell him when he must begin practising a virtue, and when to stop practising it. You may say that common sense does that. Well, I don't think it does! I know sensible people who do very brutal things: there must be something finer than common sense: it must be a mixture of sense and sympathy and imagination, and delicacy and humour and tact—and I can't find a better way of expressing it than to call it a sense of beauty, a faculty of judging, in a fine, sweet-tempered, gentle, quiet way, with a sort of

instinctive prescience as to where the ripples of what you do and say will spread to, and what sort of effect they will produce. That's the right sort of virtue—attractive virtue—which makes other people wish to behave likewise. I don't say that a man who lives like that can avoid suffering: he suffers a good deal, because he sees ugly things going on all about him; but he doesn't cause suffering—unless he intends to—and even so he doesn't like doing it. He is never spiteful or jealous. He often makes mistakes, but he recognises them. He doesn't erect barriers between himself and other people. He isn't always exactly popular, because many people hate superiority whenever they see it: but he is trusted and loved and even taken advantage of, because he doesn't go in for reprisals."

"But if you haven't got this sense of beauty," said Vincent, "how are you to get it?"

"By admiring it," said Father Payne. "I don't say that the people who have got it are conscious of it—in fact they are generally quite unconscious of it. Do you remember what Shelley—who was, I think, one of the people who had the sense of beauty as strongly as anyone who ever lived—what he said to Hogg, when Hogg told him how he had shut up an impertinent young ruffian? 'I wish I could be as exclusive as you are,' said Shelley with a sigh, feeling, no doubt, a sense of real failure—'but I cannot!' Shelley's weakness was a much finer thing than Hogg's strength. I don't say that Shelley was perfect: his imagination ran away with him to an extent that may be called untruthful; he idealised people, and then threw them over when

he discovered them to be futile; but that is the right kind of mistake to make: the wrong kind of mistake is to see people too clearly, and to take for granted that they are not as delightful as they seem."

"You mean that if one must choose," said Vincent, "it is better to be a fool than a knave."

"Why, of course," said Father Payne; "but don't call it 'a fool'—call it 'a child': that's the kind of beauty I mean, the unsuspicious, guileless, trustful, affectionate temper—that to begin with: and you must learn, as you go on, a quality which the child has not always got—a sense of humour. That is what experience ought to give you—a power, that is, of seeing what is really there, and of being more amused than shocked by it. That helps you to distinguish real knavishness from childish faults. A great many of the absurd, perverse, unkind, unpleasant things which people do are not knavish at all—they are silly, selfish little diplomacies, guileless obedience to conventions, unreasonable deference to imaginary authority. People don't mean any harm by such tricks—they are the subterfuges of weakness: but when you come upon real cynical deliberate knavishness—that is different. There's nothing amusing about that. But you must be indulgent to weakness, and only severe with strength."

"I'm getting a little confused," said Vincent.

"Not as much as I am," said Father Payne; "I don't know where I have got to, I am sure. I seem to have changed hares! But one thing does emerge, and that is, that a sort of inspired good taste is the only thing which can regulate morals. The root of all morals is ultimately beauty. Why are

we not all as greedy and dirty as the old cave-men? For the simple reason that something, for which he was not responsible, began to work in the cave-man's mind. He said to himself, 'This is not the way to behave: it would be nicer not to have killed Mary when I was angry.' And then, when that impulse is once started, human beings go too fast, and want to carry out their new discoveries of rules and principles too far: and you must have a regulating force: and if you can find a better force than the instinct for what is beautiful, tell me, and I'll undertake to talk for at least as long about it. I must stop! My sense of beauty warns me that I am becoming a bore."

XXXVI

OF BIOGRAPHY

FATHER PAYNE broke out suddenly after dinner to two or three of us about a book he had been reading.

"It's called a *Life*," he said, "at the top of every page almost. I don't wonder the author felt it necessary to remind you—or perhaps he was reminding himself? I can see him," said Father Payne, "saying to himself with a rueful expression, 'This is a Life, undoubtedly!' Why, the wax-works of Madame Tussaud are models of vivacity and agility compared to it. I never set eyes on such a book!"

"Why on earth did you go on reading it?" said I.

"Well may you ask!" said Father Payne. "It's one of my weaknesses; if I begin a book, I can put it down if it is moderately good; but

if it is either very good or very bad, I can't get out of it—I feel like a wasp in a honey-pot. I make faint sticky motions of flight—but on I go."

"Whose life was it?" I said, laughing.

"I hardly know," said Father Payne. "It leaves on my mind the impression of his having been a decent old party enough. I think he must have been a general merchant—he seems to have had pretty nearly everything on hand. He wrote books, I gather"; and Father Payne groaned.

"What were they about?" I said.

"I don't know, I'm sure," said Father Payne. "History and stuff—literary essays, and people's influence, perhaps. He went in for accounting for things, I fancy, and explaining things away. There were extracts which alienated my attention faster than any extracts I ever read. I could not keep my mind on them. God preserve me from ever falling in with any of his books; I should spend days in reading them! He travelled too—he was always travelling. Why couldn't he leave Europe alone? He has left his trail all over Europe, like a snail. He has defiled all the finest scenery on the Continent. But, by Jove, he met his match in his biographer; he has been accounted for all right. And yet I feel that it was rather hard on him. If *he* could have held his tongue about things in general, and if his biographer could have held his tongue about *him*, it would have been all right. He did no harm, so far as I can make out—he was honest and upright; he would have done very well as a trustee."

Father Payne stopped, and looked round with a melancholy air. "I have gathered," he said,

"after several hours' reading, three interesting facts about him. The first is that he wore rather loud checks—I liked that—I detected a touch of vanity in that. The second is that he was fond of quoting poetry, and the moment he did so, his voice became wholly inaudible from emotion—that's a good touch. And the third is that, if he had a guest staying with him, he used to talk continuously in the smoking-room, light his candle, go on talking, walk away talking—by Jove, I can hear him doing it—all up the stairs, along the passage to his bedroom—talk, talk, talk—in they went—then he used to begin to undress—no escape—I can hear his voice muffled as he pulled off his shirt—off went his socks—talking still—then he would actually get into bed—more explanations, more quotations. I wonder how the guest got away; that isn't related—in the intervals of an inaudible quotation, perhaps? What do you think?"

We exploded in laughter, in which Father Payne joined. Then he said: "But look here, you know, it's not really a joke—it's horribly serious! A man ought really to be prosecuted for writing such a book. That is the worst of English people, that they have no idea who deserves a biography and who does not. It isn't enough to be a rich man, or a public man, or a man of virtue. No one ought to be written about, simply because he has *done* things. He must be content with that. No one should have a biography unless he was either beautiful or picturesque or absurd, just as no one should have a portrait painted unless he is one of the three. Now this poor fellow—I daresay there were people who loved him—think what their

feelings must be at seeing him stuffed and set up like this! A biography must be a work of art—it ought not to be a post-dated testimonial! Most of us are only fit, when we have finished our work, to go straight into the waste-paper basket. The people who deserve biographies are the vivid, rich, animated natures who lived life with zest and interest. There are a good many such men, who can say vigorous, shrewd, lively, fresh things in talk, but who cannot express themselves in writing. The curse of most biographies is the letters; not many people can write good letters, and yet it becomes a sacred duty to pad a Life out with dull and stodgy documents; it is all so utterly inartistic and decorous and stupid. A biography ought to be well seasoned with faults and foibles. That is the one encouraging thing about life, that a man can have plenty of failings and still make a fine business out of it all. Yet it is regarded as almost treacherous to hint at imperfections. Now if I had had our friend the general merchant to biographise, I would have taken careful notes of his talk while undressing—there's something picturesque about that! I would have told how he spent his day, how he looked and moved, ate and drank. A real portrait of an uninteresting man might be quite a treasure."

"Yes, but you know it wouldn't do," said Barthrop; "his friends would be out at you like a swarm of wasps."

"Oh, I know that," said Father Payne. "It is all this infernal sentimentality which spoils everything; as long as we think of the dead as elderly angels hovering over us while we pray, there is

nothing to be done. If we really believe that we migrate out of life into an atmosphere of mild piety, and lose all our individuality at once, then, of course, the less said the better. As long as we hold that, then death must remain as the worst of catastrophes for everyone concerned. The result of it all is that a bad biography is the worst of books, because it quenches our interest in life, and makes life insupportably dull. The first point is that the biographer is infinitely more important than his subject. Look what an enchanting book Carlyle made out of the Life of Sterling. Sterling was a man of real charm who could only talk. He couldn't write a line. His writings are pitiful. Carlyle put them all aside with a delicious irony; and yet he managed to depict a swift, restless, delicate, radiant creature, whom one loves and admires. It is one of the loveliest books ever written. But, on the other hand, there are hundreds of fine creatures who have been hopelessly buried for ever and ever under their biographies—the sepulchre made sure, the stone sealed, and the watch set."

"But there are some good biographies?" said Barthrop.

"About a dozen," said Father Payne. "I won't give a list of them, or I should become like our friend the merchant. I feel it coming on, by Jove—I feel like accounting for things and talking you all up to my bedroom."

"But what can be done about it all?" I said.

"Nothing whatever, my boy," said Father Payne; "as long as people are not really interested in life, but in money and committees, there is nothing to be done. And as long as they hold things sacred,

which means a strong dislike of the plain truth, it's hopeless. If a man is prepared to write a really veracious biography, he must also be prepared to fly for his life and to change his name. Public opinion is for sentiment and against truth ; and you must change public opinion. But, oh dear me, when I think of the fascination of real personality, and the waste of good material, and the careful way in which the pious biographer strains out all the meat and leaves nothing but a thin and watery decoction, I could weep over the futility of mankind. The dread of being interesting or natural, the adoration of pomposity and full dress, the sickening love of romance, the hatred of reality—oh, it's a deplorable world ! "

XXXVII

OF POSSESSIONS

"I WONDER," said Father Payne one day at dinner, "whether any nation's proverbs are such a disgrace to them as our national proverbs are to us. Ours are horribly Anglo-Saxon and characteristic. They seem to me to have been all invented by a shrewd, selfish, complacent, suspicious old farmer, in a very small way of business, determined that he will not be over-reached, and equally determined, too, that he will take full advantage of the weakness of others. 'Charity begins at home,' 'Possession is nine points of the law,' 'Don't count your chickens before they are hatched,' 'When poverty comes in at the door, love flies out of the window.' They are all equally disgraceful. They deride all emotion, they despise

imagination, they are unutterably low and hard, and what is called sensible; they are frankly unchristian as well as ungentlemanly. No wonder we are called a nation of shopkeepers."

"But aren't we a great deal better than our proverbs?" said Barthrop: "do they really express anything more than a contempt for weakness and sentiment?"

"Yes," said Father Payne, "but I don't like them any better for that. Why should we be ashamed of all our better feelings? I admit that we have a sense of justice; but that only means that we care for material possessions so much that we are afraid not to admit that others have the right to do the same. The real obstacle to socialism in England is the sense of sanctity about a man's savings. The moment that a man has saved a few pounds, he agrees to any legislation that allows him to hold on to them."

"But aren't we, behind all that," said Barthrop, "an intensely sentimental nation?"

"Yes," said Father Payne, "but that's a fault really—we don't believe in real justice, only in picturesque justice. We are hopeless individualists. We melt into tears over a child that is lost, or a dog that howls; and we let all sorts of evil systems and arrangements grow and flourish. We can't think algebraically, only arithmetically. We can be kind to a single case of hardship; we can't take in a widespread system of oppression. We are improving somewhat; but it is always the particular case that affects us, and not the general principle."

"But to go back to our sense of possession," I said, "is that really much more than a matter

of climate? Does it mean more than this, that we, in a temperate climate inclining to cold, need more elaborate houses and more heat-producing food than nations who live in warmer climates? Are not the nations who live in warmer climates less attached to material things simply because they are less important?"

"There is something in that, no doubt," said Father Payne. "Of course, where nature is more hostile to life, men will have to work longer hours to support life than where 'the spicy breezes blow soft o'er Ceylon's isle.' But it isn't that of which I complain—it is the awful sense of respectability attaching to possessions, the hideous way in which we fill our houses with things which we do not want or use, just because they are a symbol of respectability. We like hoarding, and we like luxuries, not because we enjoy them, but because we like other people to know that we can pay for them. I do not imagine that there is any nation in the world whose hospitality differs so much from the mode in which people actually live as ours does. In a sensible society, if we wanted to see our friends, we should ask them to bring their cold mutton round, and have a picnic. What we do actually do is to have a meal which we can't afford, and which our guests know is not in the least like our ordinary meals; and then we expect to be asked back to a similarly ostentatious banquet."

"But isn't there something," said Barthrop, "in Dr. Johnson's dictum, that a meal was good enough to eat, but not good enough to ask a man to? Isn't it a good impulse to put your best before a guest?"

"Oh, no doubt," said Father Payne, "but there's a want of simplicity about it if you only want to entertain people in order that they may see you do it, and not because you want to see them. It's vulgar, somehow—that's what I suspect our nation of being. Our inability to speak frankly of money is another sign. We do money too much honour by being so reticent about it. The fact is that it is the one sacred subject among us. People are reticent about religion and books and art, because they are not sure that other people are interested in them. But they are reticent about money as a matter of duty, because they are sure that everyone is deeply interested. People talk about money with nods and winks and hints—those are all the signs of a sacred mystery!"

"Well, I wonder," said Barthrop, "whether we are as base as you seem to think!"

"I will tell you when I will change my mind," said Father Payne; "all the talk of noble aims and strong purposes will not deceive me. What would convert me would be if I saw generous giving a custom so common that it hardly excited remark. You see a few generous *wills*—but even then a will which leaves money to public purposes is generally commented upon; and it almost always means, too, if you look into it, that a man has had no near relations, and that he has stuck to his money and the power it gives him during his life. If I could see a few cases of men impoverishing themselves and their families in their lifetime for public objects; if I saw evidence of men who have heaped up wealth content to let their children start again in the race, and determined to support the State rather than

the family; if I could hear of a rich man's children beseeching their father to endow the State rather than themselves, and being ready to work for a livelihood rather than to receive an inherited fortune; if I could hear of a few rich men living simply and handing out their money for general purposes,—then I would believe! But none of these things is anything but a rare exception; a man who gives away his fortune, as Ruskin did, in great handfuls, is generally thought to be slightly crazy; and, speaking frankly, the worth of a man seems to depend not upon what he has given to the world, but upon what he has gained from the world. You may say it is a rough test;—so it is! But when we begin to feel that a man is foolish in hoarding and wise in lavishing, instead of being foolish in lavishing and wise in hoarding, then, and not till then, shall I believe that we are a truly great nation. At present the man whom we honour most is the man who has been generous to public necessities, and has yet retained a large fortune for himself. That is the combination which we are not ashamed to admire."

XXXVIII

OF LONELINESS

We were walking together, Father Payne and I. It was in the early summer—a still, hot day. The place, as I remember it, was very beautiful. We crossed the stream by a little foot-bridge, and took a bypath across the meadows; up the slope you came to a beautiful bit of old forest country, the

trees of all ages, some of them very ancient; there were open glades running into the heart of the woodland, with thorn thickets and stretches of bracken. Hidden away in the depth of the woods, and approached only by green rides, were the ruins of what must have been a big old Jacobean mansion; but nothing remained of it except some grassy terraces, a bit of a fine façade of stone with empty windows, half-hidden in ivy, and some tall stone chimney-stacks. The forest lay silent and still; and, along one of the branching rides, you could discern far away a glimpse of blue hills. The scene was so entirely beautiful that we had gradually ceased to talk, and had given ourselves up to the sweet and quiet influence of the place.

We stood for awhile upon one of the terraces, looking at the old house, and Father Payne said, "I'm not sure that I approve of the taste for ruins; there is something to be said for a deserted castle, because it is a reminder that we do not need to safeguard ourselves so much against each others' ill-will; but a roofless church or a crumbling house —there's something sad about them. It seems to me a little like leaving a man unburied in order that we may come and sentimentalise over his bones. It means, this house, the decay of an old centre of life—there's nothing evil or cruel about it, as there is about a castle; and I am not sure that it ought not to be either repaired or removed—

> "'And doorways where a bridegroom trode
> Stand open to the peering air.'"

"I don't know," I said; "I'm sure that this is somehow beautiful. Can't one feel that nature

is half-tender, half-indifferent to our broken designs?"

"Perhaps," said Father Payne, "but I don't like being reminded of death and waste—I don't want to think that they can end by being charming—the vanity of human wishes is more sad than picturesque. I think Dr. Johnson was right when he said, 'After all, it is a sad thing that a man should lie down and die.'"

A little while afterwards he said, "How strange it is that the loneliness of this place should be so delightful! I like my fellow-beings on the whole—I don't want to avoid them or to abolish them—but yet it is one of the greatest luxuries in the world to find a place where one is pretty sure of not meeting one of them."

"Yes," I said, "it is very odd! I have been feeling to-day that I should like time to stand still this summer afternoon, and to spend whole days in rambling about here. I won't say," I said with a smile, "that I should prefer to be quite alone; but I shouldn't mind even that in a place like this. I never feel like that in a big town—there is always a sense of hostile currents there. To be alone in a town is always rather melancholy; but here it is just the reverse."

"Indeed, yes," said Father Payne, "and it is one of the great mysteries of all to me what we really want with company. It does not actually take away from us our sense of loneliness at all. You can't look into my mind, nor can I look into yours; whatever we do or say to break down the veil between us, we can't do it. And I have often been happier when alone than I have ever been in any company."

"Isn't it a sense of security?" I said; "I suppose that it is an instinct derived from old savage days which makes us dread other human beings. The further back you go, the more hatred and mistrust you find; and I suppose that the presence of a friend, or rather of someone with whom one has a kind of understanding, gives a feeling of comparative safety against attack."

"That's it, no doubt," said Father Payne; "but if I had to choose between spending the rest of my life in solitude, or in spending it without a chance of solitude, I should be in a great difficulty. I am afraid that I regard company rather as a wholesome medicine against the evils of solitude than I regard solitude as a relief from company. After all, what is it that we want with each other?—what do we expect to get from each other? I remember," he said, smiling, "a witty old lady saying to me once that eternity was a nightmare to her. —'For instance,' she said, 'I enjoy sitting here and talking to you very much; but if I thought it was going on to all eternity, I shouldn't like it at all.' Do we really want the company of any one for ever and ever? And if so, why? Do we want to agree or to disagree? Is the point of it that we want similarity or difference? Do we want to hear about other people's experiences, or do we simply want to tell our own? Is the desire, I mean, for congenial company anything more than the pleasure of seeing our own thoughts and ideas reflected in the minds of others; or is it a real desire to alter our own thoughts and ideas by comparing them with the experiences of others? Why do we like books, for instance? Isn't it more

because we recognise our own feelings than because we make acquaintance with unfamiliar feelings? It comes to this? Can we really ever gain an idea, or can we only recognise our own ideas?"

"It is very difficult," I said; "if I answered hastily, I should say that I liked being with you because you give me many new ideas; but if I think about it, it seems to me that it is only because you make me recognise my own thoughts."

"Yes," said Father Payne, "I think that is so. If I see another man behaving well where I should behave ill, I recognise that I have all the elements in my own mind for doing the same, but that I have given undue weight to some of them and not enough weight to others. I don't think, on the whole, that anyone can give one a new idea; he can only help one to a sense of proportion. But I want to get deeper than that. You and I are friends—at least I think so; but what exactly do we give each other? How do you affect my solitude, or I yours? I'm blessed if I know. It looks to me, indeed, as if you and I might be parts of one great force, one great spirit, and that we recognise our unity, through some material condition which keeps us apart. I am not sure that it isn't only the body that divides us, and that we are a part of the same thing behind it all."

"But why, if that is so," said I, "do we feel a sense of unity with some people, and not at all with others? There are people, I mean, with whom I feel that I have simply nothing in common, and that our spirits could not possibly mix or blend. With you, to speak frankly, it is different. I feel as though I had known you far longer than a few months, and

should never be in any real doubt about you. I recognise myself in you and yourself in me. But there are many people in whom I don't recognise myself at all."

Father Payne put his arm through mine, "Well, old man," he said, "we must be content to have found each other, but we mustn't give up trying to find other people too. I think that is what civilisation means—a mutual recognition—we're only just at the start of it, you know. I'm in no doubt as to what you give me—it's a sense of trust. When I think about you, I feel, 'Come, there is someone at all events who will try to understand me and to forgive me and to share his best with me'—but even so, my boy, I shall enjoy being alone sometimes. I shall want to get away from everyone, even from you! There are thoughts I cannot share with you, because I want you to think better of me than I do of myself. I suppose that is vanity—but still old Wordsworth was right when he wrote:

> "'And many love me; but by none
> Am I enough beloved.'"

XXXIX

OF THE WRITER'S LIFE

I WAS walking once with Father Payne in the fields, and he was talking about the difficulties of the writer's life. He said that the great problem for all industrious writers was how to work in such a way as not to be a nuisance to the people they lived with. "Of course men vary very much in their

habits," he said; "but if you look at the lives of authors, they often seem tiresome people to get on with. The difficulty is mostly this," he went on, "that a writer can't write to any purpose for more than about three hours a day—if he works really hard, even that is quite enough to tire him out. Think what the brain is doing—it is concentrated on some idea, some scene, some situation. Take a novelist: he has to have a picture in his mind all the time—a clear visualisation of a place—a room, a garden, a wood; then he must know how his people move and look and speak, and he has to fly backwards and forwards from one to another; then he has the talk to create, and he has to be always rejecting thoughts and impressions and words, good enough in themselves, but not characteristic. It is a fearful strain on imagination and emotion, on phrase-making and word-finding. The real wonder is not that a few people can do it better than others, but that anyone can do it at all. The difference between the worst novelist and the best is much less than the difference between the worst novelist and the person who can't write at all.

"Well, then, there is such a thing as inspiration; most creative writers get a book in their minds, and can think of nothing else, day and night, while it is on. The difficulty is to know what a writer is to do in the intervals between his books, and in the hours in which he is not writing. He has got to take it easy somehow, and the question is what is he to do. He can't, as a rule, do much in the way of hard exercise. Violent exercise in the open air is pleasant enough, but it leaves the brain torpid and stagnant. A man who really makes a business of

writing has got to live through ten or twelve hours of a day when he isn't writing. He can't afford to read very much—at least he can't afford to read authors whom he admires, because they affect his style. There is something horribly contagious about style, because it is often much easier to do a thing in someone else's way than to do it in one's own. Pater was asked once if he had read Stevenson or Kipling, I forget which—'Oh no, I daren't!' he said, 'I have peeped into him occasionally, but I can't afford to read him. I have learnt exactly how I can approach and develop a subject, and if I looked to see how he does it, I should soon lose my power. The man with a style is debarred from reading fine books unless they are on lines entirely apart from his own.' That is perfectly true, I expect. There is nothing so dreadful as reading a writer whom one likes, and seeing that he has got deflected from his manner by reading some other craftsman. The effect is a very subtle one. If you really want to see that sort of sympathy at work, you should look at Ruskin's letters—his letters are deeply affected by the correspondent to whom he is writing. If he wrote to Carlyle or to Browning, he wrote like Carlyle and Browning, because, as he wrote, they were strongly in his mind.

"With a painter or a musician it is different—a lot of hand-work comes in which relieves the brain, so that they can work longer hours. But a writer, as a rule, while he is writing, can't even afford to talk very much to interesting people, because talking is hard work too.

"Well, then, a writer, as an artistic person, is rather easily bored. He likes vivid sensations and

emphatic preferences—and it is not really good for him to be bored; a man may read the paper, write a few letters, stroll, garden, chatter—but if he takes his writing seriously, he must somehow be fresh for it. It isn't easy to combine writing with any other occupation, and it leaves many hours unoccupied.

"Carlyle is a terrible instance, because he was wretched and depressed when he was not writing; he was melancholy, peevish, physically unwell; and when he was writing, he was wholly absorbed, very impatient of his labour, and most intolerable. Indeed, it does not look as if the home lives of writers have generally been very happy—there is too often a patent conspiracy to keep the great irritable babyish giant amused—and that's a bad atmosphere for anyone to live in—an unreal, a royal sort of atmosphere, of deferential scheming."

I said something about Walter Scott. "Ah yes," said Father Payne, "but Scott's work was amazing—it just seemed to overflow from a gigantic reservoir of vitality. He could do his day's work in the early hours, and then tramp about all day, chattering, farming, planting, entertaining—endlessly good-humoured. Of course he wore himself out at last by perfectly ghastly work—most of it very poor stuff. Browning and Thackeray were men of the same sort, sociable, genial, exuberant. They overflowed too—they didn't batter things out.

"But, as a rule, most men who want to do good work, must be content to potter about, and seem lazy and even self-indulgent. And one of the reasons why many men who start as promising writers come to nothing is because they can't be inert, acquiescent, easy-going. I have often thought

that a good novel might be written about the wife of a great writer, who marries him, dazzled by his brilliance, and then finds him to be a petty, suspicious, wayward sort of child, with all his force lying in one supreme faculty of vision and expression. It must be a fiery trial to see deep, wise, beautiful things produced by a man who can't *live* his thoughts—can only write them."

"But what should a man *do?*" I said.

"Well," said Father Payne, "I think, as a practical matter, it would be a good thing to cultivate a hobby of a manual kind—and also, above all, the power of genial loafing. Of course, the real pity is that we are not all taught to do some house-work as a matter of course—we depend too much on servants, and house-work is the natural and amusing outlet of our physical energies; as it is, we specialise too much, and half of our maladies and discomforts and miseries are due to that—that we work a part of ourselves too hard, and the other parts not hard enough. The thing to aim at is equanimity, and the existence of unsatisfied instincts in us is what poisons life for many people."

He was silent for a little, and then he said, "And then, too, there is the great danger of all writers—the feeling that he has the power of giving people what they want, when he ought to remember that he has only the good fortune of expressing what people feel. Art oughtn't to be a thing sprinkled on life, as you shake sugar out on to a pudding—it is just a power of disentangling things; we suffer most of us from finding life too complicated—we don't understand it—it's a mass of confused impressions. Well, the artist puts it all in order, isolates

the important things, makes the values distinct—he helps people to feel clearly—that's his only use. And then, if he succeeds, there come silly flatteries and adorations—until he gets to feel as if he were handing down pots of jam and bottles of wine from a high shelf out of reach—until he grows to believe that he put them there, when he only found them there. It's a dreadful thing for an artist never to succeed at all, because then his life appears the most useless business conceivable; but it is almost a worse thing to get to depend upon success—and it is undeniably pleasant to be a personage, to cause a little stir when you enter a room, to find that people know all about you and like meeting you, and saying they have met you. I never had any of that: and I have sometimes found myself with successful writers who made me thank God I couldn't write—such complacency, such lolling among praise, such vexation at not being deferred to! The best fate for a man is to be fairly successful, and to be at the same time pretty severely criticised. That keeps him modest, while it gives him a degree of confidence that he is doing something useful. The danger is of drifting right out of life into unreal civilities and compliments, which you don't wholly like and yet can't do without. The fact is that writing doesn't generally end in very much happiness, except perhaps the happiness of work. That's the solid part of it really, and no one can deprive you of that, whatever happens."

XL

OF WASTE

WE were discussing Keats and his premature death. Someone had said that, beside being one of the best, he was also one of the most promising of poets; and Father Payne had remarked that reading Keats's letters made him feel more directly in the presence of a man of genius than any other book he knew. Kaye had added that the death of Keats seemed to him the most ghastly kind of waste, at which Father Payne had smiled, and said that that presupposed that he was knocked out by some malign or indifferent force. "It is possible—isn't it?" he added, "that he was needed elsewhere and summoned away." "Then why was he so elaborately tortured first?" said Kaye. "Well," said Father Payne, "I can conceive that if he had recovered his health, and escaped from his engagement with Fanny Brawne, he might have been a much finer fellow afterwards. There were two weak points in Keats, you know—his over-sensuousness and a touch of commonness—I won't call it vulgarity," he added, "but his jokes are not of the best quality! I do not feel sure that his suffering might not have cleared away the poisonous stuff."

"Perhaps," said Kaye; "but doesn't that make it more wasteful still? The world needs beauty—and for a man to die so young with his best music in him seems to me a clumsy affair."

"I don't know," said Father Payne; "it seems to me harder to define the word *waste* than almost any

word I know. Of course there are cases when it is obviously applicable—if a big steamer carrying a cargo of wheat goes down in a storm, that is a lot of human trouble thrown away—and a war is wasteful, because nations lose their best and healthiest parental stock. But it isn't a word to play with. In a middle-class household it is applied mainly to such things as there being enough left of a nice dish for the servants to enjoy; and, generally speaking, I think it might be applied to all cases in which the toil spent over the making of a thing is out of all proportion to the enjoyment derived from it. But the difficulty underlying it is that it assumes a knowledge of what a man's duty is in this world—and I am not by any means sure that we know. Look at the phrase 'a waste of time.' How do we know exactly how much time a man ought to allot to sleep, to work, to leisure? I had an old puritanical friend who was very fond of telling people that they wasted time. He himself spent nearly two hours of every day in dressing and undressing. That is to say that when he died at the age of seventy-six, he had spent about six entire years in making and unmaking his toilet! Let us assume that everyone is bound to give a certain amount of time to doing the necessary work of the world—enough to support, feed, clothe, and house himself, with a margin to spare for the people who can't support themselves and can't work. Then there are a lot of outlying things which must be done—the work of statesmen, lawyers, doctors, writers—all the people who organise, keep order, cure, or amuse people. Then there are all the people who make luxuries and comforts—things not exactly necessary, but still reason-

able indulgences. Now let us suppose that anyone is genuinely and sensibly occupied in any one of these ways, and does his or her fair share of the world's work: who is to say how such workers are to spend their margin of time? There are obviously certain people who are mere drones in the hive—rich, idle, extravagant people: we will admit that they are wasters. But I don't admit for a moment that all the time spent in enjoying oneself is wasted, and I think that people have a right to choose what they do enjoy. I am inclined to believe that we are here to live, and that work is only a part of our material limitations. A great deal of the usefulness of work is not its intrinsic value, but its value to ourselves. It isn't only what we perform that matters; it is the fact that work forces us into relations with other people, which I take to be the experience we all need. In the old dreary books of my childhood, the elders were always hounding the young people into doing something useful—useful reading, useful sewing, and so forth. But I am inclined to believe that sociability and talk are more useful than reading, and that solitary musing and dreaming and looking about are useful too. All activity is useful, all interchange, all perception. What isn't useful is anything which hides life from you, any habit that drugs you into inactivity and idleness, anything which makes you believe that life is romantic and sentimental and fatuous. I wouldn't even go so far as to say that *all* the time spent in squabbling and quarrelling is useless, because it brings you up against people who think differently from yourself. That becomes wasteful the moment it leaves you with the impotent desire

to hurt your adversary. No, I am inclined to think that the only thing which is wasteful is anything which suspends interest and animation and the love of life; and I don't blame idle and extravagant people who live with zest and liveliness for doing that. I only blame them for not seeing that their extravagance is keeping people at the other end of the scale in drudgery and dulness. Of course the difficulty of it is, that if we offered the lowest stratum of workers a great increase of leisure, they would largely misuse it; and that is why I believe that in the future a large part of the education of workers will be devoted to teaching them how to employ their leisure agreeably and not noxiously. And I believe that there are thousands of cases in the world which are infinitely worse than the case of Keats—who, after all, had more joy of the finest quality in his short life than most of us achieve. I mean the cases of men and women with fine and sensitive instincts, who by being born under base and down-trodden conditions are never able to get a taste of clean, wholesome, and beautiful life at all —that's a much darker problem."

"But how do you fit that into your theories of life at all?" said Vincent.

"Oh, it fits my theory of life well enough," said Father Payne. "You see, I believe it to be a real battle, and not a sham fight. I believe in God as the source of all the fine, beautiful, and free instincts, casting them lavishly into the world, against a horribly powerful and relentless but ultimately stupid foe. 'Who put the evil there?' you may say, 'and how did it get there first?' Ah, I don't know that—that is the origin of evil. But I don't

believe that God put it there first, just for the interest of the fight. I don't believe that He is responsible for waste—I think it is one of the forces He is fighting. He pushes battalion after battalion to the assault, and down they go. It's cruel work, but it isn't anything like so cruel as to suppose that He arranged it all or even permitted it all. That would indeed sicken and dishearten me. No, I believe that God never wastes anything; but it's a fearful and protracted battle; and I believe that He will win in the end. I read a case in the paper the other day of a little child in a workhouse that had learnt a lot of infamous language, and cursed and swore if it was given milk instead of beer or brandy. Am I to believe that God was in any way responsible for putting a little child in that position?—for allowing things to take shape so, if He could have checked it? No, indeed! I do not believe in a God as helpless or as wicked as that! There is something devilish there, for which He is not responsible, and against which He is fighting as hard as He can."

"But doesn't heredity come in there?" said Vincent. "It isn't the child's fault, and probably no amount of decent conditions would turn that child into anything respectable."

"Yes," said Father Payne; "heredity is just one of the evil devices—but don't you see the stupidity of it? It stops progress, but it also helps it on—it hinders, but it also helps; and nothing in the world seems to me so Divine as the way in which God is using and mastering heredity for good. It multiplies evil, but it also multiplies good; and God has turned that weapon against the contriver

of it. The wiser that the world grows, the more they will see how to use heredity for happiness, by preventing the tainted from continuing to taint the races. The slow civilisation of the world is the strongest proof I know that the battle is going the right way. The forces of evil are being slowly transformed into the forces of good. The waste of noble things is but the slow arrival of the new armies of light. There is something real in fighting for a General who has a very urgent and terrible business on hand. There is nothing real about fighting for one who has brought both the armies into the field. It doesn't do to sentimentalise about evil, and to say that it is hidden good! The world is a probation, I don't doubt—but it is testing your strength against something which is really there, and can do you a lot of harm, not against something which is only there for the purpose of testing what might have been made and kept both innocent and strong."

XLI

OF EDUCATION

FATHER PAYNE generally declined to talk about education. "Teaching is one of the things, like golf and hunting, which is exciting to do and pleasant to remember, but intolerable to talk about," he said one evening.

"Well," I said, "it is certainly intolerable to listen to people discussing education, or to read about it; but if you know anything about it, I should have thought it was good fun to talk about it."

"Ah," said Father Payne, "you say, 'If you know anything about it.' The worst of it is that everybody knows everything about it. A man who is a success, thinks that his own education is the only one worth having; a man who is a failure thinks that all systems of education are wrong. And as for talking about teaching, you can't talk about it —you can only relate your own experience, and listen with such patience as you can muster to another man relating his. That's not talking!"

"But it is interesting in a general way," said Vincent,—"the kind of thing you are aiming at, what you want to produce, and so on."

"Yes, my dear Vincent," said Father Payne, "but education isn't that—it's an obstinate sort of tradition; it's a quest, like the Philosopher's Stone. Most people think that it is a sort of charm which, if you could discover it, would transmute all baser metals into gold. The justification of the Philosopher's Stone is, I suppose, that different metals are not really different substances, but only different arrangements of the same atoms. But we can't predicate that of human spirits as yet; and to attempt to find one formula of education is like planting the same crop in different soils. It is the ridiculous democratic doctrine of human equality which is the real difficulty. There is no natural equality in human nature, and the question really is whether you are going to try to reduce all human beings to the same level, which is the danger of discipline, or to let people follow their own instincts unchecked, which is the shadow of liberty. I'm all for liberty, of course."

"But why 'of course'?" said Vincent.

"Because I take the aristocratic view," said Father Payne, "which is that you do more for the human race by having a few fine people, than by having an infinite number of second-rate people. What the first-rate man thinks to-day, the second-rate people think to-morrow—that is how we make progress; and I would like to take infinite pains with the best material, if I could find it, and leave discipline for the second-rate. The Jews and the Greeks, both first-class nations, have done more for the world on the whole than the Romans and the Anglo-Saxons, who are the best of the second-rate stocks."

"But how are you going to begin to sort your material?" said Barthrop.

"Yes, you have me there," said Father Payne. "But I don't despair of our ultimately finding that out. At present, the worst of men of genius is that they are not always the most brisk and efficient boys. A genius is apt to be perceptive and sensitive. His perceptiveness makes him seem bewildered, because he is vaguely interested in everything that he sees; his sensitiveness makes him hold his tongue, because he gets snubbed if he asks too many questions. Men of genius are not as a rule very precocious—they are often shy, awkward, absent-minded. Genius is often strangely like stupidity in its early stages. The stupid boy escapes notice because he is stupid. The genius escapes notice because he is diffident, and *wants* to escape notice."

"But how would you set about discovering which was which?" said Barthrop.

"Well," said Father Payne, "if you ask me, I

don't think we discriminate; I think we go in for teaching children too much, and not trying to make them observe and think more. We give them things to do, and to get by heart; we imprison them in a narrow round of gymnastics. As Dr. Johnson said once, 'You teach your children the use of the globes, and when they get older you wonder that they do not seek your society!' The whole thing is so devilish dull, and it saves the teacher such a lot of trouble! I myself was fairly quick as a boy, and found that it paid to do what I was told. But I never made the smallest pretence to be interested in what I had to do—grammar, Euclid, tiny scraps of Latin and Greek. I used to thank God, in Xenophon lessons, when a bit was all about stages and parasangs, because there were fewer words to look out. The idea of teaching languages like that! If I had a clever boy to teach a language, I would read some interesting book with him, telling him the meaning of words, until he got a big stock of ordinary words; I would just teach him the common inflexions; and when he could read an easy book, and write the language intelligibly, then I would try to teach him a few niceties and idioms, and make him look out for differences of style and language. But we begin at the wrong end, and store his memory with exceptions and idioms and niceties first. No sensible human being who wanted, let us say, to know enough Italian to read Dante, would dream of setting to work as we set to work on classics. Well then," Father Payne went on, "I should cultivate the imagination of children a great deal more. I should try to teach them all I could about the world as it is—the different nations, and how

they live, the distribution of plants and animals, the simpler sorts of science. I don't think that it need be very accurate, all that. But children ought to realise that the world is a big place, with all sorts of interesting and exciting things going on. I would try to give them a general view of history and the movement of civilisation. I don't mean a romantic view of it, with the pomps and shows and battles in the foreground; but a real view—how people lived, and what they were driving at. The thing could be done, if it were not for the bugbear of inaccuracy. To know a little perfectly isn't enough; of course, people ought to be able to write their own language accurately, and to do arithmetic. Outside of that, you want a lot of general ideas. It is no good teaching everything as if everyone was to end as a Professor."

"That is a reasonable general scheme," said Barthrop, "but what about special aptitudes?"

"Why," said Father Payne, "I should go on those general lines till boys and girls were about fourteen. And I should teach them with a view to the lives they were going to live. I should teach girls a good deal of house-work, and country boys about the country—we mustn't forget that the common work of the world has to be done. You must somehow interest people in the sort of work they are going to do. It is hopeless without that. And then we must gradually begin to specialise. But I'm not going into all that now. The general aim I should have in view would be to give people some idea of the world they were living in, and try to interest them in the part they were going to play; and I should try to teach them how to

employ their leisure. That seems entirely left out at present. I want to develop people on simple and contented lines, with intelligent interests and, if possible, a special taste. The happy man is the man who likes his work, and all education is a fraud if it turns out people who don't like their work; and then I want people to have something to fall back upon which they enjoy. No one can live a decent life without having things to look forward to. But, of course, the whole thing turns on Finance, and that is what makes it so infernally dull. You want more teachers and better teachers; you want to make teaching a profession which attracts the best people. You can't do that without money, and at present education is looked upon as an expensive luxury. That's all part of the stodgy Anglo-Saxon mind. It doesn't want ideas —it wants positions which carry high salaries; and really the one thing which blocks the way in all our education is that we care so much for money and property, and can't think of happiness apart from them. As long as our real aim in England is income, we shall not make progress; because we persist in thinking of ideas as luxuries in which a man can indulge if he has a sufficient income to afford to do so."

"You take a gloomy view of our national ideals, Father," said Vincent.

"Not a gloomy view, my boy," said Father Payne; "only a dull view! We are a respectable nation—we adore respectability; and I don't think it is a sympathetic quality. What I want is more sympathy and more imagination. I think they lead to happiness; and I don't think the Anglo-

Saxon cares enough about happiness; if he is happy, he has an uneasy idea that he is in for a disaster of some kind."

XLII

OF RELIGION

I FOUND Father Payne one morning reading a letter with knitted brows. Presently he cast it down on the table with a gesture of annoyance. "What a fool one is to argue!" he said—and then stopping, he said, "But you wanted something—what is it?" It was a question about some books which was soon answered. Then he said: "Stay a few minutes, won't you, unless you are pressed? I have got a tiresome letter, and if you will let me pour out my complaint to you, I shall be all right—otherwise I shall go about grumbling and muttering all day, and inventing repartees."

I sate down in a chair. "Yes, do tell me!" I said; "I have really very little to do this morning, but finish up a bit of work."

He looked at me with a twinkle in his eye. "I expect you ought to be at work," he said, "and if I were conscientious, I should send you away—but this is rather interesting, I think."

He meditated for a moment, and then went on. "It's this! I have got involved in an argument with an old friend of mine who is a stiff sort of High-Churchman—a parson. It's about religion, too, and it's no good arguing about religion. You only confirm your adversary in his opinion. He

brings forth the bow, and makes ready the arrows within the quiver. I needn't go into the argument. It's the old story. He objected to something I said as 'vague,' and I was ass enough to answer him. He is one of those people who is very strong on dogma, and treats his religion as if it were a sort of trades' union. He thinks I am a kind of blackleg, not true to my principles; or rather he thinks that I am not a Christian at all, and only call myself one for the sake of the associations. Of course he triumphs over me at every point. He is entrenched in what he calls a logical system, and he fires off texts as if from a machine-gun. Of course my point is that all strict denominations have got a severely logical system, but that they can't all be sound, because they all deduce different conclusions from the same evidence. All denominational positions are drawn up by able men, and I imagine that an old theology like the Catholic theology is one of the most ingenious constructions in the world from the logical point of view. But the mischief of it all is that the data are incomplete, and many of them are not mathematically demonstrable at all. They are all coloured by human ideas and personalities and temperaments, and half of them are intuitions and experiences, which vary at different times and under different circumstances. All precise denominational systems are the outcome of the desire for a precise certainty in the minds of business-like people—the people who say that they wish to know exactly where they are. Now I don't go so far as to say, or even to think, that religion will always be as mysterious a thing as it is now. I fully expect that we shall know much

more about it some day. But we don't at present know very much about the central things of all—the nature of God, the relation of good and evil, life after death, human psychology. We have not reached the point of being able definitely to identify the moral force of the world with the forces which do not appear to be moral, but are undoubtedly active—with realities, that is, as we come into contact with them. There are no scientific certainties on these points—we simply have not reached that stage. My friend's view is that out of a certain number of denominations, one is undoubtedly right. My view is that all are necessarily incomplete. But the moment I say this, he says that my religion is so vague as not to be a religion at all.

"Now my own position is this, that I think religion, by which I mean our relation to the Power behind the world, is the most important fact in the world, as well as the most absorbingly interesting. Whatever form of religion I study, I seem to see the same thing going on. The saints, however much they differ in dogma, seem to me to have a strong family likeness. Mysticism is a very definite thing indeed, and I have never any doubt that all mystics have the same or a very similar experience, namely, the perception of some perfectly definite force—as real a force as electricity, for instance—with which they are in touch. Something, which is quite clearly there, is affecting them in a particular way.

"If you ask me what that something is, I don't know. I believe it to be a sort of life-force, which can and does mingle itself with our own life; and I believe that we are all affected by it, just as every

drop of water on the earth is affected by the moon's attraction—though we can measure that effect in an ocean by observing the tides, when we can't measure it in a basin of water. We are not all equally conscious of it, and I don't know why that is. Sometimes I am aware of it myself, and sometimes not. But I have had enough experience of it to feel that something is making signals to me, affecting me, attracting me. And the reason why I am a Christian is because in Christianity and in the teaching of Christ I feel the influence of it in a way that I feel it nowhere else in the same degree. I feel that Christ was closer to what I recognise as God; knew God better than anyone that ever lived, and in a different kind of way—from inside, so to speak. But it's a *life* that I find in the Gospel, and not a *creed:* and I believe that this is religion, to be somehow in touch with a higher life and a higher sort of beauty.

"But I personally don't want this explained and defined and codified. That seems to me only to hem it in and limit it. The moment I find it reduced to dogma and rule, to definite channels of grace, to particular powers entrusted to particular persons, then I begin to be stifled and, what is worse, bored. I don't feel it to be a logical affair at all —I feel it to be a living force, the qualities of which are virtue, beauty, peace, enthusiasm, happiness; all the things which glow and sparkle in life, and make me long to be different—to be stronger, wiser, more patient, more interested, more serene. I want to share my secret with others, not to keep it to myself. But when I argue with my friend, I don't feel it is my secret but his, and that in his

mind the force itself is missing, while a lot of rules and logical propositions and arrangements have taken its place. It is just as though I were in love with a girl, and were taken to task by someone, and informed of a score of conventions which I must observe if I wish to be considered really in love. I know what love means to me, and I know how I want to make love; and the same sort of thing is happening to lovers all the world over, though they don't all make love in the same way. You can't codify the rules of love!"

Presently he went on: "It seems to me like this—like seeing the reflection of the moon. You may see it in the marble basin of a fountain, clear and distinct. You may see it blurred into ripples on a wind-stirred sea. You may see it moulded into liquid curves on a swift stream. The changing shapes of it matter little—you are sure that it is the same thing which is being reflected, however differently it appears. I believe that human nature has a power of reflecting God, and the different denominations seem to me to reflect Him in different ways, like the fountain and the stream and the sea. But the same thing is there, though the forms seem to vary. And therefore we must not quarrel with the different attempts to reflect it—or even be vexed if the fountain tells the sea that it is not reflecting the moon at all. Take my advice, my boy," he added, smiling, "and never argue about religion—only try to make your own spirit as calm and true as you can!"

XLIII

OF CRITICS

I CAME in from a stroll one day with Father Payne and Barthrop. Father Payne opened a letter which was lying on the hall table, and saying, "Hallo, Leonard, look at this. Gladwin is coming down for Sunday—that will be rather fun!"

"I don't know about fun," said Barthrop; "at least I doubt if I should find it fun, if I had the responsibility of entertaining him."

"Yes, it's a great responsibility," said Father Payne. "I feel that. Gladwin is a man who has to be taken as you find him, but who never makes any pretence of taking you as he finds you! But it will amuse me to put him through his paces a bit!"

"Who on earth is Gladwin?" said I, consumed by curiosity.

Father Payne and Barthrop laughed. "I should like Gladwin to hear that!" said Barthrop.

"Only it would grieve him still more if Duncan *had* heard of him," said Father Payne; "there would be a commonness about that!" Then turning to me, he said, "Gladwin? Well, he's about the most critical man in England, I suppose. He does a little work—a very little: and I think he might have been a great man, if he hadn't become so fearfully dry. He began by despising everyone else, and ended by despising himself—and now it's almost a torture to him to make up his mind. 'There's something base about a

decision,' he once said to me. But 'despising' isn't the right word. He doesn't despise—that would be coarse. He only feels the coarseness of things in general. He has got too fine an edge on his mind—everything blunts it!"

"Do you remember Rose's song about him?" said Barthrop.

"Yes, what was it?" said Father Payne.

"The refrain," said Barthrop, "was

"'Not too much of whatever is best,
That is enough for me!'"

Father Payne laughed. "Yes, I remember!" he said; "'Not too much' is a good stroke!"

I happened to be with Father Payne when Gladwin arrived. He was a small, trim, compact man, about forty, unembarrassed and graceful, but with an air of dejection. He had a short pointed beard and moustache, and his hair was growing grey. He had fine thin hands, and he was dressed in old but well-fitting clothes. He had an atmosphere of great distinction about him. I had expected something incisive and clear-cut about him, but he was conspicuously gentle, and even deprecating in manner. He greeted Father Payne smilingly, and shook hands with me, with a courteous little bow. We strolled a little in the garden. Father Payne did most of the talking, but Gladwin's silence was sympathetic and impressive. He listened to us tolerantly, as a man might listen to the prattle of children.

"What are you doing just now?" said Father Payne after a pause.

"Oh, nothing worth mentioning," said Gladwin

softly. "I work more slowly than ever, I believe. It can hardly be called work, indeed. In fact, I want to consult you about a few little bits—they can hardly be called anything so definite as 'pieces' —but I am in doubt about their arrangement. The placing of independent pieces is such a difficulty to me, you know! One must secure some sort of a progression!"

"Ah, I shall enjoy that," said Father Payne. "But you won't take my advice, you know—you never do!"

"Oh, don't say that," said Gladwin. "Of course one must be ultimately responsible. It can't be otherwise. But I always respect your judgment. You always help me to the materials, at all events, for a decision!"

Father Payne laughed, and said, "Well, I shall be at your service any time!"

A little while after, Gladwin said he thought he would go to his room. "I know your ways here," he said to me with a smile; "one mustn't interfere with a system. Besides I like it! It is such a luxury to obliterate oneself!" When we met again before dinner, Gladwin walked across to a big picture, an old sea-piece, rather effectively painted, which Father Payne had found in a garret, and had had restored and framed.

"What is this?" said Gladwin very gently; "I think this is new?"

Father Payne told him the story of its discovery, adding, "I don't suppose it is worth much—but it has a certain breeziness about it, I think."

Gladwin considered it in silence, and then turned away.

"Do you like it?" said Father Payne—a little maliciously, I thought.

"Like it?" said Gladwin meditatively, "I don't know that I can go as far as that! I like it in your house."

Gladwin said very little at dinner. He ate and drank sparingly; and I noticed that he looked at any dish that was offered him with a quick scrutinising glance. He tasted his first glass of wine with the same air of suspense, and then appeared to be relieved from a preoccupation. But he joined little in the talk, and exercised rather a sobering effect upon us. Once or twice he spoke out. Mention was made of Gissing's *Papers of Henry Ryecroft*, and Father Payne asked him if he had read it. "Oh no, I couldn't *read* it, of course," said Gladwin; "I looked into it, and had to put it away. I felt as if I had opened a letter addressed to someone else by mistake!"

At a later period of the evening, a discussion arose about the laws of taste. Father Payne had said that the one phenomenon in art he could not understand was the almost inevitable reaction which seemed to take place in the way in which the work of a great writer or painter or musician is regarded a few years after his vogue declines. "I am not speaking," said Father Payne, "of poor, commonplace, merely popular work, but of work which was acclaimed as great by the best critics of the time, and which will probably return to pre-eminence." He instanced, I remember, Mendelssohn and Tennyson. "Of course," he said, "they both wrote a great deal—perhaps too much—and some kind of sorting is necessary. I don't mind the *Idylls of the*

King, or the *Elijah*, being relegated to oblivion, because they both show signs of having been done with one eye on the public. But the progressive young man won't hear of Tennyson or Mendelssohn being regarded as serious figures in art at all. Yet I honestly believe that poems like 'Now Sleeps the Crimson Petal,' or 'Come down, O Maid,' have a high and permanent beauty about them; or, again, the overture to the *Midsummer Night's Dream*. I can't believe that it isn't a thing full of loveliness and delight. I can't for the life of me see what happens to cause such things to be forgotten. Tennyson and Mendelssohn seem to me to have been penetrated with a sense of beauty, and to have been great craftsmen too: and their work at its best not only satisfied the most exacting and trained critics, but thrilled all the most beauty-loving spirits of the time with ineffable content, as of a dream fulfilled beyond the reach of hope. And yet all the light seems to die out of them as the years go on. The new writers and musicians, the new critics, the new audience, are all preoccupied with a different presentment of beauty. And then, very slowly, the light seems to return to the old things—at least to the best of them: but they have to suffer an eclipse, during which they are nothing but symbols of all that is hackneyed and commonplace in music and literature. I think things are either beautiful or not: I can't believe in a real shifting of taste, a merely relative and temporary beauty. If it only happened to the second-rate kinds of goodness, it would be intelligible—but it seems to involve the best as well. What do you think, Gladwin?"

Gladwin, who had been dreamily regarding the wine in his glass, gave a little start almost of pain, as if a thorn had pricked him. He glanced round the table, and then said in his gentlest voice, "Well, Payne, I don't quite know from what point of view you are speaking—from the point of view of serious investigation, or of edification, or of mere curiosity? I should have to be sure of that. But, speaking hurriedly and perhaps intemperately, I should be inclined to think that there was a sort of natural revolt against a convention, a spontaneous disgust at deference being taken for granted. Isn't it like what takes place in politics—though, of course, I know nothing about politics—the way, I mean, in which the electors get simply tired of a political party being in power, and give the other side a chance of doing better? I mean that the gross and unintelligent laudation of any artist who arrives at what is called assured fame, naturally turns one's mind on to the critical consciousness of his imperfections. I don't say it's noble or right—in fact, I think it is probably ungenerous—but I think it is natural."

"Yes, there is a good deal in that," said Father Payne, "but ought not the trained critics to withstand it?"

"The trained critic," said Gladwin, "the man who sells his opinion of a work of art for money, is, of course, the debased outcome of a degrading system. If you press me, I should consider that both the extravagant laudation and the equally extravagant reaction are entirely vulgar and horrible. Personally, I am not easily pleased: but then what does it matter whether I am pleased or not?"

"But you sometimes bring yourself to form, and even express, an opinion?" said Father Payne with a smile.

"An opinion—an opinion"—said Gladwin, shaking his head, "I don't know that I ever get so far as that. One has a kind of feeling, no doubt; but it is so far underground, that one hardly knows what its operations may be."

"'Well said, old mole! Canst work i' the earth so fast? A worthy pioneer!'" said Payne, laughing.

Gladwin gave a quick smile: "A good quotation!" he said, "that was very ready! I congratulate you on that! But there's more of the mole than the pioneer about my work, such as it is!"

Gladwin drifted about the next day like a tired fairy.

He had a long conference with Father Payne, and at dinner he seemed aloof, and hardly spoke at all. He vanished the next day with an air of relief. "Well, what did you think of our guest?" said Father Payne to me, meeting me in the garden before dinner.

"Well," I said, "he seemed to me an unhappy, heavily-burdened man—but he was evidently extraordinarily able."

"Yes," said Father Payne, "that's about it. His mind is too big for him to carry. He sees everything, understands everything, and passes judgment on everything. But he hasn't enough vitality. It must be an awful curse to have no illusions—to see the inferiority of everything so clearly. He's awfully lonely, and I must try to see more of him. But it is very difficult. I used

to amuse him, and he appointed me, in a way he has, a sort of State Jester—Royal Letters Patent, you know. But then he began to detect the commonness of my mind and taste, and, one by one, all the avenues of communication became closed, If I liked a book which he disliked, and praised it to him, he became inflicted with a kind of mental nausea : and it's impossible to see much of a man, with any real comfort, when you realise that you are constantly turning him faint and sick. I had a dreary time with him yesterday. He produced some critical essays of his own, which he was thinking of making into a book. They were awfully dry, like figs which have been kept too long—not a drop of juice in them. They were hideously acute, I saw that. But there wasn't any reason why they should have been written. They were mere dissections : I suggested that he should call them 'Depreciations,' and he shivered, and I felt a brute. But that didn't last long, because he has a way of putting you in your place. I felt like something in a nightmare he was having. He annexes you, and he disapproves of you at the same time. I am awfully sorry for him, but I can't help him. The moment I try, I run up against his disapproval, and my vulgar spirit revolts. He's an aristocrat, through and through. He comes and hoists his flag over a place. I felt all yesterday as if I were a rather unwelcome guest in his house, you know. It's a stifling atmosphere. I can't breathe or speak, because I instantly feel myself suspected of crudity ! The truth is that Gladwin thinks you can live upon light, and forgets that you also want air."

"It seems rather a ghastly business," I said.

"Yes," said Father Payne, "it's a wretched business! That combination of great sensitiveness and great self-righteousness is the most melancholy thing I know. You have to get rid of one or the other—and yet that is how Gladwin is made. Now, I have plenty of opinions of my own, but I don't consider them final or absolute. It ends, of course, in poor Gladwin knowing about a hundredth part of what is going on in the world, and thinking that it's d—d bad. Of course it is, if you neglect the other ninety-nine parts altogether!"

XLIV

OF WORSHIP

It was one of those perfectly fine and radiant days of early summer, with a touch of easterly about the breeze, which means perhaps a drier air, and always seems to bring out the true colours of our countryside, as with a touch of ethereal golden-tinged varnish. The humid rain-washed days, so common in England, are beautiful enough, with their rolling cloud-ranges and their soft mistiness: but the clear sparkle of this brighter weather, summer without its haze, intensifying each tone of colour and sharply defining each several tint, has a special beauty of form as well as of hue.

I walked with Father Payne far among the fields. He was at first in a silent mood, observing and enjoying. We passed a field carpeted with buttercups, and he said, "That's a beautiful touch, 'the

flower-enamelled field'—it isn't just washed with colour, it is like hammered work of beaten gold, like the letters in old missals!" Presently he burst out into talk: "I don't want to say anything affected," he began, "but a day like this, out in the country, gives me a stronger feeling of what I can only describe as *worship* than anything else in the world, because the scene holds the beauty of life so firmly up before you. Worship means the sense of the unmistakable presence of beauty, I am sure—a beauty great and overwhelming, which one has had no part in making—'The sea is His, and He made it, and His hands prepared the dry land. O come, let us worship and fall down, and kneel before the Lord our Maker'—it's that exactly—a sense of joyful abasement in the presence of something great and infinitely beautiful. I do wish that were more clearly stated and understood and believed. Religion, as we know it in its technical sense, is so faint-hearted about it all! It has limited worship to things beautiful enough, arches and music and ceremony: and it is so afraid of vagueness, so considerate of man's feeble grasp and small outlook, that it is afraid of recognising all the channels by which that sense is communicated, for fear of weakening a special effect. I'll tell you two or three of the experiences I mean. You know old Mrs. Chetwynd, who is fading away in that little cottage beyond the churchyard. She is poor, old, ill. She can hardly be said to have a single pleasure, as you and I reckon pleasures. She just lies there in that poky room waiting for death, always absolutely patient and affectionate and sweet-tempered, grateful for everything, never

saying a hard or cross word. Well, I go to see her sometimes—not as often as I ought. She shakes hands with that old knotted-looking hand of hers which has grown soft enough now after its endless labours. She talks a little — she is interested in all the news, she doesn't regret things, or complain, or think it hard that she can't be out and about. After I have been with her for two minutes, with her bright old eyes looking at me out of such a thicket, so to speak, of wrinkles,—her face simply hacked and seamed by life,—I feel myself in the presence of something very divine indeed,—a perfectly pure, tender, joyful, human spirit, suffering the last extremity of discomfort and infirmity, and yet entirely radiant and undimmed. It is then that I feel inclined to kneel down before God, and thank Him humbly for having made and shown me so utterly beautiful a thing as that poor old woman's courage and sweetness. I feel as I suppose the devout Catholic feels before the reserved Sacrament in the shrine—in the presence of a divine mystery; and I rejoice silently that God is what He is, and that I see Him for once unveiled.

"And then the sight of a happy and contented child, kind and spirited and affectionate, like little Molly Akers, never making a fuss, or seeming to want things for herself, or cross, or tiresome—that gives me the same feeling! Then flowers often give me the same feeling, with their cleanness and fresh beauty and pure outline and sweet scent—so useless in a way, often so unregarded, and yet so content just to be what they are, so apart from every stain and evil passion.

"And then in the middle of that you see a man

like Barlow stumbling home tipsy to his frightened wife and children, or you read a bad case in the papers, or a letter from a man of virtue finding fault with everybody and slinging pious Billingsgate about: or I lose my own temper about something, and feel I have made a hash of my life—and then I wonder what is the foul poison that has got into things, and what is the dismal ugliness that seems smeared all over life, so that the soul seems like a beautiful bird caught in a slime-pit, and trying to struggle out, with its pinions fouled and dabbled, wondering miserably what it has done to be so filthily hampered."

He stopped for a minute, and I could see that his eyes were full of tears.

"It is no good giving up the game!" he said. "We are in the devil of a mess, no doubt: and even if we try our best to avoid it, we dip into the slime sometimes! But we must hold fast to the beautiful things, and be on the look-out for them everywhere. Not shut our eyes in a rapture of sentiment, and think that we can:

> "'Walk all day, like the Sultan of old, in a garden of spice!'

"That won't do, of course! We can't get out of it like that! But we must never allow ourselves to doubt the beauty and goodness of God, or make any mistake about which side He is on. The marvel of dear old Mrs. Chetwynd is just that beauty has triumphed, in spite of everything. With every kind of trouble, every temptation to be dispirited and spiteful and wretched, that fine spirit has got through—and, by George, I envy her the awaken-

ing, when that sweet old soul slips away from the cage where she is caught, and goes straight to the arms of God!"

He turned away from me as he said this, and I could see that he struggled with a sob. Then he looked at me with a smile, and put his arm in mine. "Old man," he said, "I oughtn't to behave like this—but a day like this, when the world looks as it was meant to look, and as, please God, it *will* look more and more, goes to my heart! I seem to see what God desires, and what He can't bring about yet, for all His pains. And I want to help Him, if I can!

> "'We too! We ask no pledge of grace,
> No rain of fire, no heaven-hung sign.
> Thy need is written on Thy face—
> Take Thou our help, as we take Thine!'

"That's what I mean by worship—the desire to be *used* in the service of a Power that longs to make things pure and happy, with groanings that cannot be uttered. The worst of some kinds of worship is that they drug you with a sort of lust for beauty, which makes you afraid to go back and pick up your spade. We mustn't swoon in happiness or delight, but if we say 'Take me, use me, let me help!' it is different, because we want to share whatever is given us, to hand it on, not to pile it up. Of course it's little enough that we can do: but think of old Mrs. Chetwynd again—what has she to give? Yet it is more than Solomon in all his beauty had to offer. We must be simple, we mustn't be ambitious. Do you remember the old statesman who, praising a disinterested man, said that he was

that rare and singular type of man who did public work for the sake of the public? That's what I want you to do—that is what a writer can do. He can remind the world of beauty and simplicity and purity. He can be 'a messenger, an interpreter, one among a thousand, *to show unto man his uprightness!*' That's what you have got to do, old boy! Don't show unto man his nastiness—don't show him up! Keep on reminding him of what he really is or can be."

He went on after a moment. "I ought not to talk like this," he said, "because I have failed all along the line. 'I put in my thumb and pull out a plum,' like Jack Horner. I try a little to hand it on, but it is awfully nice, you know, that plum! I don't pretend it isn't."

"Why, Father," I said, much moved at his kind sincerity, "I don't know anyone in the world who eats fewer of his plums than you!"

"Ah, that's a friendly word!" said Father Payne. "But you can't count the plum-stones on my plate."

We did not say much after this. We walked back in the summer twilight, and my mind began to stir and soar, as indeed it often did when Father Payne showed me his heart in all its strength and cleanness. No one whom I ever met had his power of lighting a flame of pure desire and beautiful hopefulness, in the fire of which all that was base and mean seemed to shrivel away.

XLV

OF A CHANGE OF RELIGION

I WAS walking one day with Father Payne; he said to me, "I have been reading Newman's *Apologia* over again—I must have read it a dozen times! It is surely one of the most beautiful and singular books in the whole world?—and I think that the strangest sentence in it is this,—'Who would ever dream of making the world his confidant?' Did Newman, do you suppose, not realise that he had done that? And what is stranger still, did he not know that he had told the world, not the trivial things, the little tastes and fancies which anyone might hear, but the most intimate and sacred things, which a man would hardly dare to say to God upon his knees. Newman seems to me in that book to have torn out his beating and palpitating heart, and set it in a crystal phial for all the world to gaze upon. And further, did Newman really not know that this was what he always desired to do and mostly did—to confide in the world, to tell his story as a child might tell it to a mother? It is clear to me that Newman was a man who did not only desire to be loved by a few friends, but wished everybody to love him. I will not say that he was never happy till he had told his tale, and I will not say that artist-like he loved applause: but he did *not* wish to be hidden, and he earnestly desired to be approved. He craved to be allowed to say what he thought—it is pathetic to hear him say so often how 'fierce' he was—and yet he hated

suspicion and hostility and misunderstanding: and though he loved a refined sort of quiet, he even more loved, I think, to be the centre of a fuss! I feel little doubt in my own mind that, even when he was living most retired, he wished people to be curious about what he was doing. He was one of those men who felt he had a special mission, a prophetical function. He was a dramatic creature, a performer, you know. He read the lessons like an actor: he preached like an actor: he was intensely self-conscious. Naturally enough! If you feel like a prophet, the one sign of failure is that your audience melts away."

Father Payne paused a moment, lost in thought.

"But," I said, "do you mean that Newman calculated all his effects?"

"Oh, not deliberately," said Father Payne, "but he was an artist pure and simple—he was never less by himself than when he was alone, as the old Provost of Oriel said of him. He lived dramatically by a kind of instinct. The unself-conscious man goes his own way, and does not bother his head about other people: but Newman was not like that. When he was reading, it was always like the portrait of a student reading. That's the artist's way—he is always living in a sort of picture-frame. Why, you can see from the *Apologia*, which he wrote in a few weeks, and often, as he once said, in tears, how tenderly and eagerly he remembered all he had ever done or thought. His descriptions of himself are always romantic: he lived in memories, like all poets."

"But that gives one a disagreeable sense of unreality—of pose," I said.

"Ah, but that's very short-sighted," said Father Payne. "Newman's was a beautiful spirit—wonderfully tender-hearted, self-restrained, gentle, sensitive, beauty-loving. He loved beauty as much as any man who ever lived—beautiful conduct, beautiful life—and then his gift of expression! There's a marvellous thing. It's pure poetry, most of the *Apologia:* look at the way he flashes into metaphor, at his exquisite pictures of persons, at his irony, his courtesy, his humour, his pathos. He and Ruskin knew exactly how to confide in the world, how to humiliate themselves gracefully in public, how to laugh at themselves, how to be gay—it's all so well-bred, so delicate! Depend upon it, that's the way to make the world love you—to tell it all about yourself like a charming child, without any boasting or bragging. The world is awfully stupid! It adores well-bred egotism. We are all deeply inquisitive about *people;* and if you can reveal yourself without vanity, and are a lovable creature, the world will overwhelm you with love. You can't pay the world a greater compliment than to open your heart to it. You must not bore it, of course, nor must you seem to be demanding its applause. You must just seem to be in need of sympathy and comfort. You must be a little sad, a little tired, a little bewildered. I don't say that is easy to do, and a man must not set out to do it. But if a man has got something childlike and innocent about him, and a naïve way with him, the world will take him to its heart. The world loves to pity, to compassionate, to sympathise, much more than it loves to admire."

"But what about the religious side of it all?" I said.

"Ah," said Father Payne, "I think that is more touching still. The people who change their religion, as it is called,—there is something extremely captivating about them as a rule. To want to change your form of religion simply means that you are unhappy and uneasy. You want more beauty, or more assurance, or more sympathy, or more antiquity. Have you never noticed how all converts personify their new Church in feminine terms? She becomes a Madonna, something at once motherly and young. It is the passion with which the child turns away from what is male and rough, to the mother, the nurse, the elder sister. The convert isn't really in search of dogmas and doctrines: he is in love with a presence, a shape, something which can clasp and embrace and love him. I don't feel any real doubt of that. The man who turns away to some other form of faith wants a home. He sees the ugliness, the spite, the malice, the contentiousness of his own Church. He loathes the hardness and uncharitableness of it; he is like a boy at school sick for home. To me Newman's logic is like the effort of a man desperately constructing a bridge to escape to the other side of the river. The land beyond is like a landscape seen from a hill, a scene of woods and waters, of fields and hamlets—everything seems peaceful and idyllic there. He wants the wings of a dove, to flee away and be at rest. It is the same feeling which makes people wish to travel. When you travel, the new land is a spectacular thing—it is all a picture. It is not that you crave to live in a foreign land: you merely want the luxury of seeing life without living life. No ordinary

person goes to live in Italy because he has studied the political constitution and organisation of Italy, and prefers it to that of England. So, too, the charm of a religious conversion is that it doesn't seem unpatriotic to do it—but you get the feel of a new country without having to quit your own. And the essence of it is a flight from conditions which you dread and dislike. Of course Newman does not describe it so—that is all a part of his guilelessness—he speaks of the shadow of a hand upon the wall: but I don't doubt that his subconscious mind thrilled with the sense of a possible escape that way. His heart was converted long before his mind. What he hated in the English Church was having to decide for himself—he wanted to lean on something, to put himself inside a stronghold: he wanted to obey. Some people dislike the way in which he made himself obey,—the way he argued himself into holding things which were frankly irrational. But I don't mind that! It is the pleasure of the child in being told what to do instead of having to amuse itself."

He was silent for a little, and then he said: "I see it all so clearly, and yet of course it is in a sense inconceivable to me, because to my mind all the Churches have got a burden of belief which they can't carry. The Gospel is simple enough, and it is as much as I can do to live on those lines. Besides, I don't want to obey—I want to obey as little as I can! The ecclesiastical and the theological tradition is all a world of shadows to me. I can't be bound by the pious fancies of men who knew no science, and very little about evidence of any kind. What I want is just a simple and

beautiful principle of living, such as I feel thrills through the words of Christ. The Prodigal Son —that's almost enough for me! It is simplification that I want, and independence. Of course I see that if that isn't what a man wants, if he requires that something or someone should be infallible, then he does require a good deal of argument and information and history. But though I don't object to people who want all that, it isn't what I am in search of. I want as much strong emotion and as little system as I can get. By emotion I don't mean sentiment, but real motives for acting or not acting. I want to hear someone saying, 'Come up hither,' and to see something in his face which makes me believe he sees something that I don't see and that I wish to see. I don't feel that with Newman! He is fifty times better than myself, but I couldn't do the thing in his way, though I love him with all my heart: it's a quiet sort of brotherhood that I want, and not too many rules. In fact, it is *laws* I want, and not *rules*, and to feel the laws rather than to know them. I can't help feeling that Newman spent too much of his time in the law-court, pleading and arguing: and it's stuffy in there! But he will remain for ever one of those figures whom the world will love, because it can pity him as well as admire him. Newman goes to one's head, you know, or to one's heart! And I expect that it was exactly what he wanted to do all the time!"

XLVI

OF AFFECTION

FATHER PAYNE, on our walks, invariably stopped and spoke to animals. I will not say that animals were always fond of him, because that is a privilege confined to saints, and heroes of romantic legends. But they generally responded to his advances. It used to amuse me to hear the way he used to talk to animals. He would stop to whistle to a caged bird: "You like your little prison, don't you, sweet?" he would say. Or he would apostrophise a cat, "Well, Ma'am, you must find it wearing to carry on your expeditions all night, and to live the life of a domestic saint all day?" I asked him once why he did not keep a dog, when he was so fond of animals. "Oh, I couldn't," he said; "it is so dreadful when dogs get old and ill, and when they die! It's sentiment, too; and I can't afford to multiply emotions—there are too many as it is! Besides, there is something rather terrible to me about the affection of a dog—it's so unreasonable a devotion, and I like more critical affections—I prefer to earn affection! I read somewhere the other day," he went on, "that it might easily be argued that the dog was a higher flight of nature even than man; that man has gone ahead in mind and inventiveness; but that the dog is on the whole the better Christian, because he does by instinct what man fails to do by intention—he is so sympathetic, so unresentful, so trustful! It is really amazing, if you come to think of it, the

dog's power of attachment to another species. We must seem very mysterious to dogs, and yet they never question our right to use them as we will, while nothing shakes their love. And then there is something wonderful in the way in which the dog, however old he is, always wants to play. Most animals part with that after their first youth; but a dog plays, partly for the fun of it, and partly to make sure that you like his company and are happy. And yet it is a little undignified to care for people like that, you know!"

"How ought one to care for people?" I said.

"Ah, that's a large question," said Father Payne, "the duty of loving—it's a contradiction in terms! To love people seems the one thing in the world you cannot do because you ought to do it; and yet to love your neighbour as yourself can't *only* mean to behave *as if* you loved him. And then, what does caring about people mean? It seems impossible to say. It isn't that you want anything which they can give you—it isn't that they need anything you can give them; it isn't always even that you want to see them. There are people for whom I care who rather bore me; there are people who care for me who bore me to extinction; and again there are people whose company I like for whom I don't care. It isn't always by any means that I admire the people for whom I care. I see their faults, I don't want to resemble them. Then, too, there have been people for whom I have cared very much, and wanted to please, who have not cared in the least for me. Some of the best-loved people in the world seem to have had very little love to give away! I have

a sort of feeling that the people who evoke most affection are the people who have something of the child always in them—something petulant, wilful, self-absorbed, claiming sympathy and attention. It is a certain innocence and freshness that we love, I think; the quality that seems to say, 'Oh, do make me happy'; and I think that caring for people generally means just that you would like to make them happy, or that they have it in their power to make you happy. I think it is a kind of conspiracy to be happy together, if possible. Probably the mistake we make is to think it is one definite thing, when a good many things go to make it up. I have been interested in a very large number of people—in fact, I am generally interested in people; but I haven't cared for all of them, while I have cared for a good many people in whom I have not been at all interested. But it is easier to say what the qualities are that repel affection, than what the qualities are which attract it. I don't think any faults prevent it, if people are sorry for their faults and are sorry to have hurt you. It seems to me impossible to care for spiteful people, or for the people who turn on you in a sudden anger, and don't want to be forgiven, but are glad to have made you fear them. I don't care for people who claim affection as a right, or who bargain for sacrifices. The bargaining element must be wholly absent from affection. The feeling 'it is your turn to be nice' is fatal to it. No, I think that it is a feeling that you can live at peace with the particular person that is the basis of friendship. The element of reproach must be wholly absent: I don't mean the element of criti-

cism—that can be impersonal—but the feeling 'you ought not to behave like this to me.'"

Father Payne relapsed into silence. "But," I said, "surely the people who make claims for affection are very often most beloved, even when they are unjust, inconsiderate, ill-tempered?"

"By women," said Father Payne, "but not by men—and there's another difficulty. Men and women mean such utterly different things by affection, that they can't even discuss it together. Women will do anything for you, if you claim their help, and make it clear that you need them; they will love you if you do that. A man, on the other hand, will often do his very best to help you, if you appeal to him, but he won't care for you, as a rule, in consequence. Women like emotional surprises, men do not. A man wants to get done with excitement, and to enter on an easy partnership—women like the excitement more than the ease. And then it is all complicated by the admixture of the masculine and feminine temperaments. As a rule, however, women are interested in moody temperaments, and men are bored by them. Personally, my own pleasure in meeting a real friend, or in hearing from a friend, is the pleasure of feeling 'Yes, you are there, just the same,'—it's the tranquillity that one values. The possibility of finding a man angry or pettish is unpleasant to me. I feel 'so all this nonsense has to be cleared away again!' I don't want to be questioned and scrutinised, with a sense that I am on my trial. I don't mind an ironical letter, which shows that a friend is fully aware of my faults and foibles; but it's an end of all friendship with me if I feel a man

is bent on improving me, especially if it is for his own convenience. I'm sure that the fault-finding element is fatal to affection. That may sound weak, but I can't be made to feel that I am responsible to other people. I don't recognise anyone's right to censure me. A man may criticise me if he likes, but he mustn't impose upon me the duty of living up to his ideal. I don't believe that even God does that!"

"I don't understand," I said.

"Well," said Father Payne, "I don't believe that God says, 'This is my law, and you must obey it because I choose.' I believe He says, 'This is the law, for Me as well as for you, and you will not be happy till you obey it.'—Yes, I have got it, I believe—the essence of affection is *equality*. I don't mean that you may not recognise superiorities in your friend, and he in you; but they must not come into the question of affection. Love makes equal, and when there is a real sense of equality, love can begin."

"But," I said, "the passion of lovers—isn't that all based on the worship of something infinitely superior to oneself?"

"Yes," said Father Payne, "but that means a sight of something beyond—of the thing which we all love—beauty. I don't say that equality is the thing we love—it's only the condition of loving. The lover can't love, if he feels himself *really* unworthy of love. He must believe that at worst he *can* be loved, though he may be astonished at being loved; it is in love that it is possible to meet; it is love that brings beauty within your reach, or down to your level. It is beauty

that you love in your friend, not his right to improve you. He is what you want to be; and the comfort of being loved is the comfort of feeling that there is some touch of the same beauty in yourself. It is so easy to feel dreary, stupid, commonplace—and then someone appears, and you see in his glance and talk that there is, after all, some touch of the same thing in yourself which you love in him, some touch of the beauty which you love in God. But the glory of beauty is that it is concerned with being beautiful and becoming beautiful—not in mocking or despising or finding fault or improving. Love is the finding your friend beautiful in mind and heart, and the joy of being loved is the sense that you are beautiful to him—that you are equal in that! When you once know that, little quarrels and frictions do not matter—what *does* matter is the recognising of some ugly thing which the man whom you thought was your friend really clings to and worships. Faults do not matter if only the friend is aware of them, and ashamed of them: it is the self-conscious fault, proud of its power to wound, and using affection as the channel along which the envenomed stream may flow, which destroys affection and trust."

"Then it comes to this," I said, "that affection is a mutual recognition of beauty and a sense of equality?"

"It *is* that, more or less, I believe," said Father Payne. "I don't mean that friends need be aware of that—you need not philosophise about your friendships—but if you ask me, as an analyst, what it all consists in, I believe that those are

the essential elements of it—and I believe that it holds good of the dog-and-man friendship as well!"

XLVII

OF RESPECT OF PERSONS

FATHER PAYNE had been out to luncheon one day with some neighbours. He had groaned over the prospect the day before, and had complained that such goings-on unsettled him.

"Well, Father," said Rose at dinner, "so you have got through your ordeal! Was it very bad?"

"Bad!" said Father Payne, "why should it be bad? I'm crammed with impressions—I'm a perfect mine of them."

"But you didn't like the prospect of going?" said Rose.

"No," said Father Payne, "I shrank from the strain—you phlegmatic, aristocratic people,— men-of-the-world, blasés, highly-born and highly-placed,— have no conception of the strain these things are on a child of nature. You are used to such things, Rose, no doubt—you do not anticipate a luncheon-party with a mixture of curiosity and gloom. But it is good for me to go to such affairs—it is like a waterbreak in a stream—it aerates and agitates the mind. But *you* don't realise the amount of observation I bring to bear on such an event—the strange house, the unfamiliar food, the new inscrutable people—everything has to be observed, dealt with, if possible accounted for, and if unaccountable, then inflexibly faced and recollected. A torrent of

impressions has poured in upon me—to say nothing of the anxious consideration beforehand of topics of conversation, and modes of investigation! To stay in a new house crushes me with fatigue—and even a little party like this, which seems, I daresay, to some of you, a negligible, even a tedious thing, is to me rich in far-flung experience."

"Mayn't we have the benefit of some of it?" said Rose.

"Yes," said Father Payne, "you may—you must, indeed! I am grateful to you for introducing the subject—it is more graceful than if I had simply divested myself of my impressions unsolicited."

"What was it all about?" said Rose.

"Why," said Father Payne, "the answer to that is simple enough—it was to meet an American! I know that race! Who but an American would have heard of our little experiment here, and not only wanted to know—they all do that—but positively arranged to know? Yes, he was a hard-featured man—a man of wealth, I imagine—from some place, the grotesque and extravagant name of which I could not even accurately retain, in the State of Minnesota."

"Did he want to try a similar experiment?" said Barthrop.

"He did not," said Father Payne. "I gathered that he had no such intention—but he desired to investigate ours. He was full of compliments, of information, even of rhetoric. I have seldom heard a simple case stated more emphatically, or with such continuous emphasis. My mind simply reeled before it. He pursued me as a harpooner

might pursue a whale. He had the whole thing out of me in no time. He interrogated me as a corkscrew interrogates a cork. That consumed the whole of luncheon. I made a poor show. My experiment, such as it is, stood none of the tests he applied to it. It appeared to be lacking in all earnestness and zeal. I was painfully conscious of my lack of earnestness. 'Well, sir,' he said at the conclusion of my examination-in-chief, 'I seem to detect that this business of yours is conducted mainly with a view to your own entertainment, and I admit that it causes me considerable disappointment.' The fact is, my boys," said Father Payne, surveying the table, "that we must be more conscious of higher aims here, and we must put them on a more commercial footing!"

"But that was not all?" said Barthrop.

"No, it was not all," said Father Payne; "and, to tell you the truth, I was more alarmed by than interested in the Minnesota merchant. I couldn't state my case—I failed in that—and I very much doubt if I could have convinced him that there was anything in it. Indeed, he said that my conceptions of culture were not as clear-cut as he had hoped."

"He seems to have been fairly frank," said Rose.

"He was frank, but not uncivil," said Father Payne. "He did not deride my absence of definiteness, he only deplored it. But I really got more out of the subsequent talk. We adjourned to a sort of portico, a pretty place looking on to a formal garden: it was really very charmingly done—a clever fake of an old garden, but with nothing really beautiful about it. It looked as if no one had ever lived in it, though the illusion of age was

skilfully contrived—old paving-stones, old bricks, old lead vases, but all looking as if they were shy, and had only been just introduced to each other. There was no harmony of use about it. But the talk—that was the amazing thing! Such pleasant intelligent people, nice smiling women, courteous grizzled men. By Jove, there wasn't a single writer or artist or musician that they didn't seem to know intimately! It was a literary party, I gathered: but even so there was a haze of politics and society about it—vistas of politicians and personages of every kind, all known intimately, all of them quoted, everything heard and whispered in the background of events—we had no foregrounds, I can tell you, nothing second-hand, no concealments or reticences. Everyone in the world worth knowing seemed to have confided their secrets to that group. It was a privilege, I can tell you! We simply swam in influences and authenticities. I seemed to be in the innermost shrine of the world's forces—where they get the steam up, you know!"

"But who are these people, after all?" said Rose.

"My dear Rose!" said Father Payne. "You mustn't destroy my illusions in that majestic manner! What would I not have given to be able to ask myself that question! To me they were simply the innermost circle, to whom the writers and artists of the day told their dreams, and from whom they sought encouragement and sympathy. That was enough for me. I stored my memory with anecdotes and noble names, like the man in *Pride and Prejudice.*"

"But what did it all come to?" said Rose.

"Well," said Father Payne, "to tell you the truth, it didn't amount to very much! At the the time I was dazzled and stupefied—but subsequent reflection has convinced me that the cooking was better than the food, so to speak."

"You mean that it was mostly humbug?" said Rose.

"Well, I wouldn't go quite as far as that," said Father Payne, "but it was not very nutritive—no, the nutriment was lacking! Come, I'll tell you frankly what I did think, as I came away. I thought these pretty people very adventurous, very quick, very friendly. But I don't truly think they were interested in the real thing at all—only interested in the words of the wise, and in the unconsidered trifles of the Major Prophets, so to speak. I didn't think it exactly pretentious—but they obviously only cared for people of established reputation. They didn't admire the ideas behind, only the reputations of the people who said the things. They had undoubtedly seen and heard the great people—I confess it amazed me to think how easily the men of mark can be exploited—but I did not discern that they cared about the things represented,—only about the representatives. The American was different. He, I think, cared about the ideas, though he cared about them in the wrong way. I mean that he claimed to find everything distinct, whereas the big things are naturally indistinct. They loom up in a shadowy way, and the American was examining them through field-glasses. But my other friends seemed to me to be only interested in the people who had the entrée, so to speak—the priests of the shrine.

They had noticed everything that doesn't matter about the high and holy ones—how they looked, spoke, dressed, behaved. It was awfully clever, some of it; one of the women imitated Legard the essayist down to the ground—the way he pontificates, you know—but nothing else. They were simply interested in the great men, and not interested in what make the great men different from other people, but simply in their resemblance to other people. Even great people have to eat, you know! Legard himself eats, though it's a leisurely process; and this woman imitated the way he forked up a bit, held it till the bit dropped off, and put the empty fork into his mouth. It was excruciatingly funny—I'll admit that. But they missed the point, after all. They didn't care about Legard's books a bit—they cared much more about that funny cameo ring he wears on his tie!"

"It all seems to me horribly vulgar," said Kaye.

"No, it was no more vulgar than a dance of gnats," said Father Payne. "They were all alive, those people. They were just gnats, now I come to think of it! They had stung all the great men of the day—even drawn a little blood—and they were intoxicated by it. Mind, I don't say that it is worth doing, that kind of thing! But they were having their fun—and the only mistake they made was in thinking they cared about these people for the right reasons. No, the only really rueful part of the business was the revelation to me of what the great people can put up with, in the way of being fêted, and the extent to which they seem able to give themselves away to these pretty women.

It must be enervating, I think, and even exhausting, to be so pawed and caressed; but it's natural enough, and if it amuses them, I'm not going to find fault. My only fear is that Legard and the rest think they are really *living* with these people. They are not doing that; they are only being roped in for the fun of the performance. These charming ladies just ensnare the big people, make them chatter, and then get together, as they did to-day, and compare the locks of hair they have snipped from their Samsons. But it isn't a bit malicious—it's simply childish; and, by Jove, I enjoyed myself tremendously. Now, don't pull a long face, Kaye! Of course it was very cheap —and I don't say that anyone ought to enjoy that sort of thing enough to pursue it. But if it comes in my way, why, it is like a dish of sweetmeats! I don't approve of it, but it was like a story out of Boccaccio, full of life and zest, even though the pestilence was at work down in the city. We must not think ill of life too easily! I don't say that these people are living what is called the highest life. But, after all, I only saw them amusing themselves. There were some children about, nice children, sensibly dressed, well-behaved, full of go, and yet properly drilled. These women are good wives and good mothers; and I expect they have both spirit and tenderness, when either is wanted. I'm not going to bemoan their light-mindedness; at all events, I thought it was very pleasant, and they were very good to me. They saw I wasn't a first-hander or a thoroughbred, and they made it easy for me. No, it was a happy time for me —and, by George, how they fed us! I expect the

women looked after all that. I daresay that, as far as economics go, it was all wrong, and that these people are only a sort of scum on the surface of society. But it is a pretty scum, shot with bright colours. Anyhow, it is no good beginning by trying to alter *them!* If you could alter everything else, they would fall into line, because they are good-humoured and sensible. And as long as people are kindly and full of life, I shall not complain; I would rather have that than a dreary high-mindedness."

Father Payne rose. "Oh, do go on, Father!" said someone.

"No, my boy," said Father Payne, "I'm boiling over with impressions—rooms, carpets, china, flowers, ladies' dresses! But that must all settle down a bit. In a few days I'll interrogate my memory, like Wordsworth, and see if there is anything of permanent worth there!"

XLVIII

OF AMBIGUITY

FATHER PAYNE had been listening to some work of mine: and he said at the end, "That is graceful enough, and rather attractive—but it has a great fault: it is sometimes ambiguous. Several of your sentences can have more than one meaning. I remember once at Oxford," he said, smiling, "that Collins, one of our lecturers, had been going through a translation-paper with me, and had told me three quite distinct ways of rendering a sentence, each

backed by a great scholar. I asked him, I remember, whether that meant that the original writer—it was Livy, I think—had been in any doubt as to what his words were meant to convey. He laughed, and said, 'No, I don't imagine that Livy intended to make his meaning obscure. I expect, if we took the passage to him with the three renderings, he would deride at least two of them, and possibly all three, and would point out that we simply did not know the usage of some word or phrase which would have been absolutely clear to a contemporary reader.' But Collins went on to say that there might also be a real ambiguity about the passage; and then he quoted the supposed remark of the bishop who declined to wear gaiters, and said, 'I shall wear no clothes to distinguish myself from my fellow-Christians.' This was printed in his biography, 'I shall wear no clothes, to distinguish myself from my fellow-Christians.' 'That sentence may be fairly called ambiguous,' Collins said, 'when its sense so much depends upon punctuation.'

"Now," Father Payne went on, "you must remember, in writing, that you write for the eye, you don't write for the ear. A book isn't primarily meant to be read aloud: and you mustn't resort to tricks of emphasis, such as italics and so forth, which can only be rendered by voice-inflections. It is your first duty to be absolutely clear and limpid. You mustn't write long involved sentences which necessitate the mind holding in solution a lot of qualifying clauses. You must break up your sentences, and even repeat yourself rather than be confused. There is no beauty of style like

perfect clearness, and in all writing mystification is a fault. You ought never to make your reader turn back to the page before to see what you are driving at."

"But surely," I said, "there are great writers like Carlyle and George Meredith, for instance, who have been difficult to understand."

"Yes," said Father Payne, "but that's a fault, though it may be a magnificent fault. It may mean such a pressure of ideas and images that the thing can hardly be written at length—and it may give you a sense of exuberant greatness. You may have to forgive a great writer his exuberance—you may even have to forgive him the trouble it costs to penetrate his exact thoughts, for the sake of steeping yourself in the rush and splendour of the style. But obscurity isn't a thing to aim at for anyone who is trying to write; it may be, in the case of a great writer, a sort of vociferousness which intoxicates you: and the man may convey a kind of inspiration by his very obscurities. But it must be an impulse which simply overpowers him—it mustn't be an effect deliberately planned. You may perhaps feel the bigness of the thought all the more in the presence of a writer who, for all his power, can't confine the stream, and comes down in a cataract of words. But if you begin trying for an effect, it is like splashing about in a pool to make people believe it is a rushing river. The movement mustn't be your own contortions, but the speed of the stream. If you want to see the bad side of obscurity, look at Browning. The idea is often a very simple one when you get at it; it's only obscure because it is conveyed by

hints and jerks and nudges. In *Pickwick*, for instance, one does not read Jingle's remarks for the underlying thought—only for the pleasure of seeing how he leaps from stepping-stone to stepping-stone. You mustn't confuse the pleasure of unravelling thought with the pleasure of thought. If you can make yourself so attractive to your readers that they love your explosions and collisions, and say with a half-compassionate delight—'how characteristic—but it *is* worth while unravelling!' you have achieved a certain success. But the chance is that future ages won't trouble you much. Disentangling obscurities isn't bad fun for contemporaries, who know by instinct the nuances of words; but it becomes simply a bore a century later, when people are not interested in old nuances, but simply want to know what you thought. Only scholars love obscurity—but then they are detectives, and not readers."

"But isn't it possible to be too obvious?" I said—"to get a namby-pamby way of writing—what a reviewer calls painfully kind?"

"Well, of course, the thought must be tough," said Father Payne, "but it's your duty to make a tough thought digestible, not to make an easy thought tough. No, my boy, you may depend upon it that, if you want people to attend to you, you must be intelligible. Don't, for God's sake, think that Carlyle or Meredith or Browning *meant* to be unintelligible, or even thought they were being unintelligible. They were only thinking too concisely or too rapidly for the reader. But don't you try to produce that sort of illusion. Try to say things like Newman or Ruskin—big, beautiful,

profound, delicate things, with an almost childlike naïveté. That is the most exquisite kind of charm, when you find that half-a-dozen of the simplest words in the language have expressed a thought which holds you spell-bound with its truth and loveliness. That is what lasts. People want to be fed, not to be drugged: That, I believe, is the real difference between romance and realism, and I am one of those who gratefully believe that romance has had its day. We want the romance that comes from realism, not the romance which comes by neglecting it. But that's another subject."

XLIX

OF BELIEF

"I DON'T think there is a single word in the English language," said Father Payne, "which is responsible for such unhappiness as the word 'believe.' It is used with a dozen shades of intensity by people; and yet it is the one word which is always being used in theological argument, and which, like the ungodly, 'is a sword of thine.'"

"I always mean the same thing by it, I believe!" I said.

"Excuse me," said Father Payne, "but if you will take observations of your talk, you will find you do not. At any rate, *I* do not, and I am more careful about the words I use than many people. If I have a heated argument with a man, and think he takes up a perverse or eccentric opinion, I am quite capable of saying of him, 'I believe he

must be crazy.' Now such a sentence to a foreigner would carry the evidence of a deep and clear conviction; but, as I say it, it doesn't really express the faintest suspicion of my opponent's sanity—it means little more than that I don't agree with him; and yet when I say, 'If there is one thing that I do believe, it is in the actual existence of evil,' it means a slowly accumulated and almost unalterable opinion. In the Creed, one uses the word 'believe' as the nearest that conviction can come to knowledge, short of indisputable evidence; and some people go further still, and use it as if it meant an almost higher sort of knowledge. The real meaning is just what Tennyson said,

"'Believing where we cannot prove,'

where it signifies a conviction which we cannot actually test, but on which we are content to act."

"But," I said, "if I say to a friend—'You are a real sceptic—you seem to me to believe nothing,' I mean to imply something almost cynical."

"Yes," said Father Payne, "you mean that he has no enthusiasm or ideals, and holds nothing sacred, because those are just the convictions which cannot be proved."

"Some people," I said, "seem to me simply to mean by the word 'believe' that they hold an opinion in such a way that they would be upset if it turned out to be untrue."

"Yes," said Father Payne, "it is the intrusion of the nasty personal element which spoils the word. Belief ought to be a very impersonal thing. It ought simply to mean a convergence of your own experience on a certain result; but most

people are quite as much annoyed at your disbelieving a thing which they *believe*, as at your disbelieving a thing which they *know*. You ought never to be annoyed at people not accepting your conclusions, and still less when your conclusion is partly intuition, and does not depend upon evidence. This is the sort of scale I have in my mind —'practically certain, probable, possible, unproved, unprovable.' Now, I am so far sceptical that, apart from practical certainties, which are just the convergence of all normal experience, the fact that any one person or any number of persons believed a thing would not affect my own faith in it, unless I felt sure that the people who believed it were fully as sceptical as and more clear-headed than myself, and had really gone into the evidence. But even so, as I said, the things most worth believing are the things that can't be proved by any evidence."

"What sort of things do you mean?" I said.

"Well, a thing like the existence of God," said Father Payne; "that at best is only a generalisation from an immense range of facts, and a special interpretation of them. But the amazing thing in the world is the vast number of people who are content to believe important things on hearsay, because, on the whole, they love or trust the people who teach them. The word 'believing,' when I use it, doesn't mean that a good man says it, and that I can't disprove it, but a sort of vital assent, so that I can act upon the belief almost as if I knew it. It means for me some sort of personal experience. I could not love or hate a man on hearsay, just because people whom I loved or

trusted said that they either loved or hated him. I might be so far biassed that I should meet him expecting to find him either lovable or hateful, but I could not adopt a personal emotion on hearsay—that must be the result of a personal experience; and yet the adoption of a personal emotion on hearsay is just what most people seem to me to be able to do. I might believe that a man had done good or bad things on hearsay: but I could have no feeling about him unless I had seen him. I could not either love or hate a historical personage: the most I could do would be to like or dislike all stories told about him so much that I could wish to have met him or not to have met him."

"Isn't it a question of imagination?" I said.

"Yes," said Father Payne, "and most ordinary religious belief is simply an imaginative personification: but that is a childish affair, not a reasonable affair: and that is why most religious teachers praise what they call a childlike faith, but what is really a childish faith. I don't honestly think that our religious beliefs ought to be a dog-like kind of fidelity, unresentful, unquestioning, undignified confidence. The love of Bill Sikes' terrier for Bill Sikes doesn't make Bill Sikes an admirable or lovable man: it only proves his terrier a credulous terrier. The only reason why we admire such a faith is because it is pleasant and convenient to be blindly trusted, and to feel that we can behave as badly as we like without alienating that sort of trust. I have sometimes thought that the deepest anguish of God must lie in His being loved and trusted by people to whom He has been unable so far to show Himself a loving and careful Father.

I don't believe God can wish us to love Him in an unreasonable way—I mean by simply overlooking the bad side of things. A man, let us say, with some hideous inherited disease or vice ought not to love God, unless he can be sure that God has not made him the helpless victim of disease or vice."

"But may the victim not have a faith in God through and in spite of a disease or a vice?" I said.

"Yes, if he really faces the fact of the evil," said Father Payne; "but he must not believe in a muddled sort of way, with a sort of abject timidity, that God may have brought about his weakness or his degradation. He ought to be quite clear that God wishes him to be free and happy and strong, and grieves, like Himself, over the miserable limitation. He must have no sort of doubt that God wishes him to be healthy or clean-minded. Then he can pray, he can strive for patience, he can fight his fault: he can't do it, if he really thinks that God allowed him to be born with this horror in his blood. If God could have avoided evil—I don't mean the sharp sorrows and trials which have a noble thing behind them, but the ailments of body or soul that simply debase and degrade—if He could have done without evil, but let it creep in, then it seems to me a hopeless business, trying to believe in God's power or His goodness. I believe in the reality of evil, and I believe too in God with all my heart and soul. But I stand with God against evil: I don't stand facing God, and not knowing on which side He is fighting. Everything may not be evil which I think evil: but there

are some sorts of evil—cruelty, selfish lust, spite, hatred, which I believe that God detests as much as and far more than I detest them. That is what I mean by a belief, a conviction which I cannot prove, but on which I can and do act."

"But am I justified in not sharing that belief?" I said.

"Yes," said Father Payne; "if you, in the light of your experience, think otherwise, you need not believe it—you cannot believe it! But it is the only interpretation of the facts which sets me free to love God, which I do not only with heart and soul, but with mind and strength. If I could believe that God had ever tampered with what I feel to be evil, ever permitted it to exist, ever condoned it, I could fear Him—I should fear Him with a ghastly fear—but I could not believe in Him, or love Him as I do."

L

OF HONOUR

"No, I couldn't do that," said Lestrange to Barthrop, in one of those unhappy little silences which so often seemed to lie in wait for Lestrange's most platitudinal utterances. "It wouldn't be consistent with a sense of honour."

Father Payne gave a chuckle, and Lestrange looked pained. "Oughtn't one to have a code of honour?" he said.

"Why, certainly!" said Father Payne, "but you mustn't impose your code on other people. You mustn't take for granted that your idea of honour

means the same thing to everyone. Suppose you lost money at cards, and called it a debt of honour, and thought it dishonourable not to pay it; while at the same time you didn't think it dishonourable not to pay a poor tradesman whose goods you had ordered and consumed, am I bound to accept your code of honour?"

"But there *is* a difference there," said Rose, "because the man to whom you owe a gambling debt can't recover it by law, while a tradesman can. All that a debt of honour means is that you feel bound to pay it, though you are not legally compelled to do so."

"Yes," said Father Payne, "that is so, in a sense, I admit. But still, one mustn't shelter oneself behind big words unless one is certain that they mean exactly the same to one's opponent. When I was at school there was a master who used to be fond, as he said, of putting the boys on their honour: but he never asked if we accepted the obligation. If I say, 'I give you my honour not to do a thing,' then I can be called dishonourable if I don't do it; but you can't put me on my honour unless I consent."

"But surely honour means something quite definite?" said Lestrange.

"Tell me what it is, then," said Father Payne. "Rose, you seem to have ideas on the subject. What do you mean by honour?"

"Isn't it one of the ultimate things," said Rose, "which can't be defined, but which everyone recognises—like blue and green, let me say, or sweet and bitter?"

"No," said Father Payne; "at least I don't think so. It seems to me rather an artificial thing, because

it varies at different dates. It used, not so long ago, to be considered an affair of honour to fight a duel with a man if he threw a glass of wine in your face. And what do you make of the old proverb, 'All is fair in love and war'? That seems to mean that honour is not a universal obligation. Then there's the phrase, 'Honour among thieves,' which isn't a very exalted one; or the curious thing, schoolboy honour, which dictates that a boy may know that another boy is being disgracefully and cruelly bullied, and yet is prevented by his sense of honour from telling a master about it. I admit that honour is a fine idea; but it seems to me to cover a lot of things in human nature which are very bad indeed. It may mean only a sort of prudential arrangement which binds a set of people together for a bad purpose, because they do not choose to be interfered with, and yet call the thing honour for the sake of the associations."

"Yes, I don't think it is necessarily a moral thing," said Rose, "but that doesn't seem to me to matter. It is simply an obligation, pledged or implied, that you will act in a certain way. It may conflict with a moral obligation, and then you have to decide which is the greater obligation."

"Yes, that is perfectly true," said Father Payne, "and as long as you admit that honour isn't in itself bound to be a good thing, that is all I want. Lestrange seemed to use it as if you had only got to say that a motive was honourable, to have it recognised by everyone as right. Take the case of what are called 'national obligations.' A certain party in the State, having secured a majority of votes, enters into some arrangement—a treaty, let us say

—without consulting the nation. Is that held to be for ever binding on a nation till it is formally repealed? Is it dishonourable for a citizen belonging, let us say, to the minority which is not represented by the particular Government which makes the treaty, to repudiate it?"

"Yes, I think it may be fairly called dishonourable," said Rose; "there is an obligation on a citizen to back up his Government."

"Then I should feel that honour is a very complicated thing," said Father Payne. "If a citizen thinks a treaty dishonourable, and if it is also dishonourable for him to repudiate it, it seems to me he is dishonourable whatever he does. He is obliged to consent for the sake of honour to a dishonourable thing being done. It seems to me perilously like a director of a firm having to condone fraudulent practices, because it is dishonourable to give his fellow-directors away. It is this conflict between individual honour and public honour which puzzles me, and which makes me feel that honour isn't a simple thing at all. A high conception of private honour seems to me a very fine thing indeed. I mean by it a profound hatred of anything false or cowardly or perfidious, and a loathing of anything insincere or treacherous. That sort of proud and stainless chivalry seems to me to be about the brightest thing we can discern, and the furthest beauty we can recognise. But honour seems also, according to you, to be a principle to which you can be committed by a majority of votes, whether you approve of it or not; and then it seems to me a merely detestable thing, if you can be bound by honour to acquiesce in something which you honestly believe

to be base. It seems to me a case of what Tennyson describes:

> "'His honour rooted in dishonour stood,
> And faith unfaithful kept him falsely true.'"

"But surely social obligations must often conflict with private beliefs," said Rose. "A nation or a society has got to act collectively, and a minority must be over-ridden."

"I quite agree," said Father Payne, "but why mix up honour with it at all? I don't object to a man who conscientiously dissents to some national move being told that he must lump it. But if he is called dishonourable for dissenting, then honour does not seem to me to be a real word at all, but only a term of abuse for a man who objects to some concerted plan. You can't make a dishonest thing honest because a majority choose to do it—at least I do not believe that morality is purely a matter of majorities, or that the dishonour of one century can become the honour of the next. I am inclined to believe just the opposite. I believe that the man who has so sensitive a conscience about what is honourable or not, that he is called a Quixotic fool by his contemporaries, is far more likely to be right than the coarser majority who only see that a certain course is expedient. I should believe that he saw some truth of morality clearly which the rougher sort of minds did not see. The saint—call him what you like—is only the man who stands higher up, and sees the sunrise before the people who stand lower down."

"But everyone has a right to his own sense of honour," said Rose.

"Certainly," said Father Payne, "but you must be certain that a man's sense of honour is lower than your own before you call him dishonourable for differing from you. If a man is less scrupulous than myself, I may think him dishonourable, if I also think that he knows better. But what I do not think that any of us has a right to do is to call a man dishonourable if he has more scruples than oneself. He may be over-scrupulous, but the chances are that any man who sacrifices his convenience to a scruple has a higher sense of honour than the man who throws over a scruple for the sake of his convenience. That is why I think honour is a dangerous word to play with, because it is so often used to frighten people who don't fall in with what is for the convenience of a gang."

"But surely," said Rose, "morality is after all only a word for what society agrees to consider moral."

"Yes, in a sense that is so," said Father Payne; "it is only a word to express a phenomenon. But I believe that morality is a real thing, for all that; and that our conceptions of it get clearer, as the world goes on. It is something outside of us—a law of nature if you like—which we are learning; not merely a thing which we invent for our convenience. But that is too big a business to go into now."

LI

OF WORK

I CANNOT remember now what public man it was who had died of a breakdown from overwork, but I heard Father Payne say after dinner, referring

to the event, "I wish it to be clearly understood that I think a man who dies of deliberate or reckless overwork is a victim of self-indulgence. It is nothing more or less than giving way to a passion. I am as sure as I can be of anything," he went on, "that a thousand years hence that will be recognised by human beings, and that they will feel it to be as shameful for a man to die of spontaneous overwork as for him to die of drink or gluttony or any other vice. I don't of course mean," he added, "the cases of men who have had some definite and critical job to carry through, and have decided that the risk is worth running. A man has always the right to risk his life for a definite aim —but I mean the men—you can see it in biographies, and the worst of it is that they are often the biographies of clergymen—who, in spite of physical warnings, and entreaties from their friends, and definite statements by their doctors that they are shortening their lives by labour, still cannot stop, or, if they stop, begin again too soon. No man has any right to think his work so important as that—to take unimportant things too seriously is the worst sort of frivolity."

"But isn't it the finer kind of people," said Kaye, "who make the mistake?"

"Yes, of course," said Father Payne, "but so, too, if you look into it, you will too often find that it is the finer kinds of imaginative people who take to drink and drugs. I remember," he added, "once going to see a poor friend of mine in an asylum, and the old doctor at the head of it said, 'It isn't the stupid people who come here, Mr. Payne; it is the clever people!'"

"But does not your principle about the right to risk one's life hold good here too?" said Barthrop.

"No, I think not," said Father Payne. "A man may choose to try a dangerous thing, climb a mountain, explore a perilous country, go up in a balloon, where an element of risk is inseparable from the experiment; but ordinary work isn't risky in itself. Why," he added, "I was reading a book the other day, the life of Fitzherbert, you know, who was a man of prodigious laboriousness, who died early, worn out. He had an impossible standard of perfection. If he had to write an article, he read all the literature on the subject over and over; he wrote and re-wrote his stuff. There was a case quoted in the book, as if it were to Fitzherbert's credit, when he had to send in an article by a certain date—just a *Quarterly* article. It had to go in on the Friday. He had finished it on the Monday before, when his mind misgave him. He destroyed the article, began again, sate up all Monday night and all Wednesday night, and wrote the whole thing afresh. He was laid up for a month after it. That is simply the act of an unbalanced mind."

"I can't help feeling that there is something fine about it," said Vincent.

"There is always something fine about unreasonable things," said Father Payne, "or in a man making a sacrifice for an idea. But there is an entire lack of proportion about this performance; and if Fitzherbert thought his work so valuable as that, then he ought to have reflected that he was simply limiting his future output by this reckless

expenditure of force. But the whole case was a sad one—Fitzherbert worked in a ghastly way as a boy and as a young man. He had a very broad outlook, he was interested in everything; and when he was at Oxford, he told a friend that he was discovering a hundred subjects on which he hoped to have a say. Well, then, the middle part of his life was spent in preparing himself, under the same sort of pressure, to entitle himself to have his say: and then came his first bad break-down—and the end of his life, which was a wretched period, was spent in finding elaborate reasons why he should not commit himself to any opinion whatever. If he was asked his opinion, he always said he had not studied the subject adequately. That seems to me the life of a man suffering from a sort of nightmare. Things are not so deep as all that—at least, if no one is to give an opinion on any point until he has mastered the whole sum of human opinion on the point, then we shall never make any progress at all. I remember Fitzherbert's strong condemnation of Ruskin, for giving his opinion cursorily on all subjects of importance. Yet Ruskin did a greater work than Fitzherbert, because he at least made people think, while Fitzherbert only prevented them from daring to think. I don't mean that people ought to feel competent to express an opinion on everything—yet even that habit cures itself, because, if you do it, no one pays any attention. But if a man has gone into a subject with decent care, or if he has reflected upon problems of which the data are fairly well known, I think there is every reason why he should give an opinion. It is very easy to be too conscien-

tious. There are plenty of fine hints of opinions in Fitzherbert's letters. You could make a very good book of *Pensées* out of them—he had a clear, forcible, and original mind; but he did not dare to say what he thought; and you may remember that if he was ever sharply criticised, he felt it deeply, as a sort of imputation of dishonesty. A man must not go down before criticism like that."

"But everyone must do their work in their own way?" said I.

"Yes," said Father Payne, "but Fitzherbert ended by doing nothing—he only snubbed and silenced his own fine mind, by giving way to this unholy passion for examining things. No, I want you fellows to have common-sense about these matters. There is a great deal too much sanctity attached to print. The written word—there's a dark superstition about it! A man has as much right to write as he has to talk. He may say to the world, to his unseen and unknown friends in it, whatever he may say to his intimates. You should write just as you could talk to any gentleman, with the same courtesy and frankness. Of course you must run the risk of your book falling into the hands of ill-bred people—that can't be helped—and of course you must not pretend that your book is the result of deep and copious labour, if it is nothing of the kind. But heart-breaking toil is not the only qualification for speaking. There are plenty of complicated little topics—all the problems which arise from the combination of individuals into societies—which people ought to think about, and which are really everyone's concern. The interplay, I mean, of human relations—

the moral, religious, social, intellectual ideas—which have all got to be co-ordinated. A man does not need immense knowledge for that; in fact if he studies the history of such things too deeply, he is often apt to forget that old interpreters of such things had not got all the present data. There is an immense future before writers who will interest people in and familiarise them with ideas. Some people get absorbed in life in the wrong way, just bent on acquisition and comfort—some people, again, live as if they were staying in somebody else's house—but what you want to induce men and women to do is to realise the sort of thing that life really is, and to attempt to put it in some kind of proportion. The mischief done by men like Fitzherbert, who was fond of snapping at people who produced ideas for inspection, is that ordinary people get to confuse wisdom with knowledge; and that won't do! And so the man who sets to work like Fitzherbert loses his alertness and his observation, with the result that instead of bringing a very fresh and incisive mind to bear on life, he loses his way in books, and falls a victim to the awful passion for feeling able to despise other people's opinions."

"But isn't it possible," said Vincent, "for a man to get the best out of life for himself by a sort of passion for exact knowledge—like the man in the Grammarian's funeral, I mean?"

"Personally," said Father Payne, "I always think that Browning did a lot of harm by that poem. He was glorifying a real vice, I think. If the Grammarian had said to himself, 'There is all this nasty work to be done by someone; I can do

it, and I can save other people having to waste their time over it, by doing it once and for all,' it would have been different. But I think he was partly indulging a poor sort of vanity by just determining to know what no other man knew. The point of work is twofold. It is partly good for the worker, to tranquillise his life and to reduce it to a certain order and discipline; but you mustn't do it only for the sake of your own tranquillity, any more than the artist must work for the sake of luxuriating in his own emotions. You must have something to give away: you must have some idea of combination, of helping other people to find each other and to understand each other. It is vicious to isolate yourself for your own satisfaction. Fitzherbert and the Grammarian were really misers. They just accumulated, and enjoyed the pleasure of having their own minds clear. That doesn't seem to me in itself to be a fine thing at all. It is simply the oldest of temptations, 'Ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.' That is the danger of the critical mind, that it says, 'I will know within myself what is good.' The only excuse for the critical mind is to help people not to be taken in by what is bad. It is better to be like Plato and Ruskin, to make mistakes, to have prejudices, to be unfair, even to be silly, because at least you encourage people to think that life is interesting —and that is about as much as any of us can do."

LII

OF COMPANIONSHIP

"ISN'T it rather odd," said someone to Father Payne after dinner, "that great men have as a rule rather preferred the company of their inferiors to the company of their equals?"

"I don't know," said Father Payne; "I think it's rather natural! By Jove, I know that a very little of the society of a really superior person goes a very long way with me. No, I think it is what one would expect. When the great man is at work, he is on the strain and doing the lofty business for all he is worth; when he is at leisure, he doesn't want any more strain—he has done his full share."

"But take the big groups," said someone, "like the Wordsworth set, or the pre-Raphaelite set—or take any of the great biographies—the big men of any time seem always to have been mutual friends and correspondents. You have letters to and from Ruskin from and to all the great men of his day."

"Letters, yes!" said Father Payne; "of course the great men know each other, and respect each other; but they don't tend to coagulate. They relish an occasional meeting and an occasional letter, and they say how deeply they regret not seeing more of each other—but they tend to seek the repose of their own less exalted circle. The man who has fine ideas prefers his own disciples to the men who have got a different set of fine ideas. That is natural enough! You want to

impart the ideas you believe in—you don't want to argue about them, or to have them knocked out of your hand. Depend upon it, the society of an intelligent person, who can understand you enough to stimulate you, and who is grateful for your talk, is much pleasanter, and indeed more fruitful, than the society of a man who is fully as intelligent as yourself, and thinks some of your conclusions to be rot!"

"But doesn't all that encourage people to be prophets?" Vincent said. "One of the depressing things about great men is that they grow to consider themselves a sort of special providence—the originators of great ideas rather than the interpreters."

"Yes," said Father Payne, "of course the little coteries and courts of great men are rather repulsive. But the best people don't do that. They live contentedly in a circle which combines with its admiration for the hero a comfortable feeling that, if other people knew what they know, they wouldn't feel genius to be quite so extraordinary as is commonly believed. And we must remember, too, that most great men seem greater afterwards than they did at the time. More of a treat and a privilege, I mean."

"Do you think one ought to try to catch a sight of great men who are contemporaries?" said I.

"Yes, a sight, I think," said Father Payne. "It's a pleasant thing to realise how your big man sits and looks and talks, what his house is like, and so forth. I have often rather regretted I haven't had the curiosity to get a sight of the giants. It helps you to understand them. I remember a pleasant old gentleman, Vinter by name, who lived

in London. Vinter the novelist was his son. When young Vinter became famous for a bit, and people wanted to know him, old Vinter made a glorious rule. He told his son that he might invite any well-known person he liked to the house, to luncheon or dinner—but that unless he made a special exception in any one's favour, they were not to be invited again. There's a fine old Epicurean! He liked to realise what the bosses looked like, but he wasn't going to be bothered by having to talk respectfully to them time after time."

"But that's rather tame," said Vincent. "The point surely would be to get to know a big man well."

"Why, yes," said Father Payne, "but Vinter was a wise *old* man; now I should say to any *young* man who had a chance of really having a friendship with a great man, 'Of course, take it and thank your stars!' But I shouldn't advise any young man to make a collection of celebrities, or to go about hunting them. In fact I think for an original young man, it is apt to be rather dangerous to have a real friendship with a great man. There's a danger of being diverted from your own line, and of being drawn into imitative worship. A very moderate use of great men in person should suffice anyone. Your real friends ought to be people with whom you are entirely at ease, not people whom you reverence and defer to. It's better to learn to bark than to wag your tail. I don't think the big men themselves often begin by being disciples."

"Then who *is* worth seeing?" said Vincent. "There must be somebody!"

"Why, to be frank," said Father Payne, "agreeable men like me, who haven't got too much authority, and are not surrounded by glory and worship! I'm interested in most things, and have learnt more or less how to talk—you look out for ingenious and kindly elderly men, who haven't been too successful, and haven't frozen into Tories, and yet have had some experience;—men of humour and liveliness, who have a rather more extended horizon than yourself, and who will listen to what you say instead of shutting you up, and saying 'Very likely' as Newman did—after which you were expected to go into a corner and think over your sins! Or clever, sympathetic, interesting women—not too young. Those are the people whom it is worth taking a little trouble to see."

"But what about the young people!" said Vincent.

"Oh, that will look after itself," said Father Payne. "There's no difficulty about that! You asked me whom it was worth while taking some trouble to see, and I prescribe a very occasional great man, and a good many well-bred, cultivated, experienced, civil men and women. It isn't very easy to find, that sort of society, for a young man; but it is worth trying for."

"But do you mean that you should pursue good talk?" said Vincent.

"A little, I think," said Father Payne; "there's a good deal of art in it—unconscious art in England, probably—but much of our life is spent in talking, and there's no reason why we shouldn't learn how to get the best and the most out of talk—how to start a subject, and when to drop it—how to say

the sort of things which make other people want to join in, and so on. Of course you can't learn to talk unless you have a lot to say, but you can learn *how* to do it, and better still how *not* to do it. I used to feel in the old days, when I met a clever man—it was rare enough, alas!—how much more I could have got out of him if I had known how to do the trick. It's a great pleasure, good talk; and the fact that it is so tiring shows what a real pleasure it must be. But a man with whom you can only talk *hard* isn't a companion—he's an adversary in a game. There have been times in my life when I have had a real tough talker staying here with me, when I have suffered from crushing intellectual fatigue, and felt inclined to say, like Elijah, 'Take away my life, for I am not better than my fathers.' That is the strange thing to me about most human beings—the extent to which they seem able to talk without being tired. I agree with Walter Scott, when he said, 'If the question was eternal company without the power of retiring within myself, or solitary confinement for life, I should say, "Turnkey, lock the cell!"' Companionship doesn't seem to me the normal thing. Solitude is the normal thing, with a few bits of talk thrown in, like meals, for refreshment. But you can't lay down rules for people about it. Some people are simply gregarious, and twitter together like starlings in a shrubbery: that isn't talk—it's only a series of signals and exclamations. The danger of solitude is that the machinery runs just as you wish it to run—and that wears it out."

"But isn't your whole idea of talk rather strenuous—a little artificial?" said Vincent.

"Not more so than fixed meals," said Father Payne, "or regular exercise. But, of course silent companionship is the greatest boon of all. I have a belief that even in silent companionship there is a real intermingling of vital and mental currents, and that one is much pervaded and affected by the people one lives with, even if one does not talk to them. The very sight of some people is as bad as an argument! The ideal thing, of course, is to have a few intimate friends and some comfortable acquaintances. But I am rather a fatalist about friendship, and I think that most of us get about as much as we deserve. Anyhow, it's all worth taking some trouble about; and most people make the mistake of not taking any trouble or putting themselves about; and that's not the way to behave!"

LIII

OF MONEY

I SUPPOSE I had said something high-minded, showing a supposed contempt of money, for Father Payne looked at me in silence.

"You mustn't say such things," said he, at last. "I'll tell you why! What you said was perfectly genuine, and I have no doubt you feel it—but, if if I may say so, it's like talking about a place where you have never been, as if you had visited it, when you have only read about it in the guide-book. I don't mean that you wish to deceive for an instant—but you simply don't know! That's the tragic thing about money—that it is both so important

and so unimportant. If you have enough money, you need never give it a thought; if you haven't, it's the devil! It's like health—no one who hasn't been on the wrong side of the dividing line knows what a horrible place the wrong side is. Those two things—I daresay there are others—poverty and ill-health—put a man on the rack. The healthy man, and the man with a sufficient income, are apt to think that the poor man and the ill man make a great fuss about very little. I don't know about ill-health, but by George, I know all about poverty—and I'll tell you once for all. For twenty years I was poor, and this is what that means. To be tied hand and foot to a piece of hideous drudgery—morning by morning, month by month, and with the consciousness too that, if health fails you, or if you lose your work, you will either starve or have to sponge on your friends—never to be able to do what you like or go where you like—to know that the world is full of beautiful places, delightful people, interesting ideas, books, talk, art, music——to sicken for all these things, and not even to have the time or energy to get hold of such scraps of them as can be found cheap in London—to feel time slipping away, and all your instincts for beautiful things unused and unsated—to live a solitary, grubby, nasty life—never able to entertain a friend, or to go a trip with a friend, or to do a kindness, or to help anyone generously—and yet to feel that with an income which many people would regard as ridiculously inadequate, you could do most of these things—the slavery, the bondage, the dreariness of it!" He broke off, much moved.

"But," said I, "don't many quite poor people

live happily and contentedly and kindly with minute incomes?"

"Why, yes," said Father Payne, "of course they do!—and I'm willing enough to admit that I ought to have done better than I did. But then I had been brought up differently, and by the time I had done with Oxford, I had all the tastes and instincts of the well-to-do man. That was the mischief, that I had tasted freedom. Of course, if I had been cast in a stronger and nobler mould, it would have been different—but all my senses had been acutely developed, my faculties of interest and enjoyment and appreciation—not gross things, mind you, nor feelings that *ought* to be starved, but just the wholesome delights of the well-educated man. I did not want to be extravagant, and I knew too that there were millions of people in the same case as myself. There was every reason why I should behave decently about it! If I had been really interested in my work, I could have done better—but I did not believe in the value of my work—I taught men, not to educate them, but that they might pass an examination and never look at the beastly stuff again. Whenever I reached the point at which I became interested, I had to hold my hand. And then, too, the work tired me without exercising my mind. There were the vacations, of course—but I couldn't afford to leave London—I simply lived in hell. I don't say that I didn't get some discipline out of it—and my escape gave me a stock of gratitude and delight that has been simply inexhaustible. The misery of it for me was that I had to live an unreal life. If I had been poor, and had had my leisure, and had

worked at things I cared about, with a set, let us say, of young artists, all working too at things which they cared about, it would have been different—but I hadn't the energy left to make friends, or the time to find any congenial people. I can't describe what a nightmare it all was—so that when I hear you speaking as if money didn't really matter, I simply feel that you don't know what a tragedy it can be, or what your own income saves you from. You and I have the Epicurean temperament, my boy; it's no good pretending we haven't—things appeal to our mind and senses in a way they don't appeal to everyone. So I don't think that people ought to talk lightly about money, unless they have known poverty and *not* suffered under it. I used to ask myself in those days if it was possible to suffer more, when every avenue reaching away out of my life to the things I loved and cared for seemed to be closed to me by an impassable barrier."

"But one can practise oneself in doing without things?" I said.

"With about as much success," said Father Payne, "as you can practise doing without food."

"But isn't it partly that people are unduly reticent about money?" I said. "If people could only say frankly what they can and what they can't afford, it would simplify things very much."

"I don't know," said Father Payne. "Money is one of those curious things—uninteresting if you have enough, tragic if you haven't. I don't think talking about money is vulgar—I think it is simply dull: to discuss poverty is like discussing a disease—to discuss wealth is like talking about food or wine. The poverty that simply humiliates

and pinches can't be joked about—it's far too serious for that! Of course, there are men who don't really feel the call of life. Look at our friend Kaye! If Kaye had to live in London lodgings, he wouldn't mind a bit, if he could get to the Museum Reading-Room—he only wants books and his own work—he doesn't want company or music or art or talk or friends. He is wholly indifferent to nasty food or squalor. Poverty is not a real evil to him. If he had money he wouldn't know how to spend it. I read a book the other day about a priest who lived a very devoted life in the slums—he had two rooms in a clergy-house—and there was a chapter in praise of the way in which he endured his poverty. But it was all wrong! What that man really enjoyed was preaching and ceremonial and company—he had a real love of human beings. Well, that man's life was crammed with joy—he got exactly what he wanted all day long. It wasn't a self-sacrificing life—it would have been to you and me—but he no doubt woke day after day, with a prospect of having his whole time taken up with things he thoroughly enjoyed."

"But what about the people," I said, "who really enjoy just the sense of power which money gives them, without using it—or the people whose only purpose in using it is the pleasure of being known to have it?"

"Oh, of course, they are simply barbarians," said Father Payne, "and it doesn't do *them* any harm to be poor. No, the tragedy lies in the case of a man with really expansive, generous, civilised instincts, to whom the world is full of wholesome and urgent delights, and whose life is simply

starved out of him by poverty. I have a great mind to send you to London for a couple of months, to live on a pound a week, and see what you make of it."

"I'll go if you wish it," I said.

"It might bring things home to you," said Father Payne, smiling, "but again it probably would not, because it would only be a game—the real pinch would not come. Most people would rather enjoy migrating to hell from heaven for a month—it would just give them a sharper relish for heaven."

"But do you really think your poverty hurt you?" I said.

"I have no doubt it did," said Father Payne. "Of course I was rescued in time, before the bitterness really sank down into my soul. But I think it prevented my ever being more than a looker-on. I believe I could have done some work worth doing, if I could have tried a few experiments. I don't know! Perhaps I am ungrateful after all. My poverty certainly gave me a wish to help things along, and I doubt if I should have learnt that otherwise. And I think, too, it taught me not to waste compassion on the wrong things. The people to be pitied are simply the people whose minds and souls are pinched and starved—the over-sensitive, responsive people, who feel hunted and punished without knowing why. It's temperament always, and not circumstance, which is the happy or the unhappy thing. I felt, when you said what you did about poverty, that you neither knew how harmless it could be, or how infinitely noxious it might be. I don't take a high-minded view of

money myself. I don't tell people to despise it. I always tell the fellows here to realise what they can endure and what they can't. The first requisite for a sensible man is to find work which he enjoys, and the next requisite is for him to earn as much as he really needs—that is to say without having to think daily and hourly about money. I don't over-estimate what money can do, but it is foolish to under-estimate what the want of it can do. I have seen more fine natures go to pieces under the stress of poverty than under any other stress that I know. Money is perfectly powerless as a shield against many troubles—and on the other hand it can save a man from innumerable little wretchednesses and horrors which destroy the beauty and dignity of life. I don't believe mechanically in humiliation and renunciation and ignominy and contempt, as purifying influences. It all depends upon whether they are gallantly and adventurously and humorously borne. They often make some people only sore and diffident, and I don't believe in learning to hate life. Not to learn your own limitations is childish: and one of the insolences which is most heavily punished is that of making a sacrifice without knowing if you can endure the consequences of it. The people who begin by despising money as vulgar are generally the people who end by making a mess which other people have to sweep up. So don't be either silly or prudent about money, my boy! Just realise that your first duty is not to be a burden on yourself or on other people. Find out your minimum, and secure it if you can; and then don't give the matter another thought. If it is any comfort to you,

reflect that the best authors and artists have almost invariably been good men of business, and don't court squalor of any kind unless you really enjoy it."

LIV

OF PEACEABLENESS

FATHER PAYNE, talking one evening, made a statement which involved an assumption that the world was progressing. Rose attacked him on this point. "Isn't that just one of the large generalisations," he said, "which you are always telling us to beware of?"

"It isn't an assumption," said Father Payne, "but a conviction of mine, based upon a good deal of second-hand evidence. I don't think it can be doubted. I can't array all my reasons now, or we should sit here all night—but I will tell you one main reason, and that is the immensely increased peaceableness of the world. Fighting has gone out in schools, and none but decayed clubmen dare to deplore it: corporal punishment has diminished, and isn't needed, because children don't do savage things; bullying is extinct in decent schools; crimes of violence are much more rare; duelling is no longer a part of social life, except for an occasional farcical performance between literary men or politicians in France—I saw an account of one in the papers the other day. It was raining, and one of the combatants would not furl his umbrella: his seconds said that it made him a bigger target. "I may be shot," he said, "but that is no reason

why I should get wet!" Then there is the mediæval nonsense among students in Germany, where they fence like Tweedledum and Tweedledee. Generally speaking, however, the belief that a blow is an argument has gone out. Then war has become more rare, and is more reluctantly engaged in. I suppose that till the date of Waterloo there was hardly a year in history when some fighting was not going on. No, I think it is impossible not to believe that the impulse to kick and scratch and bite is really on the decline."

"But need that be a proof of progress?" said Rose. "May it not only mean a decrease of personal courage, and a greater sensitiveness to pain?"

"I think not," said Father Payne, "because when there *is* fighting to be done, it is done just as courageously—indeed I think *more* courageously than used to be the case. No, I think it is the training of an instinct—the instinct of self-restraint. I believe that people have more imagination and more sympathy than they used to have; there is more tolerance of adverse opinion, a greater sense of liberty in the air: opponents have more respect for each other, and do not attribute bad motives so easily. Why, consider how much milder even the newspapers are. If one reads old reviews, old books of political controversy, old pamphlets—how much more blackguarding and calling names one sees. Anonymous journalists, anonymous reviewers, are now the only people who keep up the tradition of public bad manners—all signed articles and criticisms are infinitely politer than they used to be."

"But," persisted Rose, "isn't that simply a possible proof of the general declension of force?"

"Certainly not," said Father Payne, "it only means more equilibrium. You must remember that equilibrium means a balance of forces, not a mere diminution of them. There is more force present in a banked-up reservoir than in a rushing stream. The rushing stream merely means a force making itself felt without a counterbalancing force—but that isn't nearly as strong as the pressure in a reservoir exerted by the water which is trying to get out, and the resistance of the dam which is trying to keep it in. You must not be taken in by apparent placidity: it often means two forces at work instead of one. Peace, as opposed to war, is a tremendous counterpoising of forces, and it simply means an organised resistance. In old days, there was no cohesion of the forces which desire peace, and violence was unresisted. There can be no doubt, I think, that in a civilised country there are many more forces at work than in a combative country. I do not suppose that we can either of us prove whether the forces at work in the world have increased or diminished. Let us grant that the amount is constant. If so, a great deal of the force that was combative has now been transformed to the force which resists combat. But I imagine that on the whole most people would grant that human energies have increased: if that is so, certainly the combative element has not increased in proportion, while the peaceful element has increased out of all proportion."

"But," said Vincent, "you often talk in the

most bellicose way, Father. You say that we ought all to be fighting on the side of good."

"Yes," said Father Payne, "on the side of resistance to evil, I admit; but you can fight without banging and smashing things, as the dam fights the reservoir by silent cohesion. There is a temptation, from which some people suffer, to think that one can't be fighting for God at all, unless one is doing it furiously, and all the time, and successfully, and on a large and impressive scale. That is a fatal blunder. To hide your adversary's sword is often a very good way of fighting. To have an open tussle often makes the bystanders sympathise with the assailant. It is really a far more civilised thing, and often stands for a higher degree of force and honour, to be able to bear contradiction not ignobly. Direct conflict is a mistake, as a rule—blaming, fault-finding, censuring, snapping, punishing. The point is to put all your energy into your own life and work, and make it outweigh the energy of the combative critic. Do not fight by destroying faulty opinion, but by creating better opinion. You fight darkness by lighting a candle, not by waving a fan to clear it away. Look at one of the things we have been talking about—bullying in schools. That has not been conquered by expelling or whipping boys, or preaching about it—it has been abolished by kindlier and gentler family life, by humaner school-masters living with and among their boys, till the happiness of more peaceful relations all round has been instinctively perceived."

"But isn't it right to show up mean and dis-

honest people, to turn the light of publicity upon cruel and detestable things ? " said Vincent.

" Exactly, my dear Vincent," said Father Payne ; " but you can't turn the light of publicity on evil unless the light is there to turn. The reason why bullying continued was because people believed in it as inseparable from school life, and even, on the whole, bracing. What has got rid of it is a kinder and more tender spirit outside. I don't object to showing up bad things at all. By all means put them, if you can, in a clear light, and show their ugliness. Show your shame and disgust if you like, but do not condescend to personal abuse. That only weakens your case, because it merely proves that you have still some of the bully left in you. Be peaceable writers, my dear boys," said Father Payne, expanding in a large smile. " Don't squabble, don't try to scathe, don't be affronted ! If your critic reveals a weak place in your work, admit it, and do better ! I want to turn you out peace-makers, and that needs as much energy and restraint as any other sort of fighting. Don't make the fact that your opponent may be a cad into a personal grievance. Make your own idea clear, stick to it, repeat it, say it again in a more attractive way. Don't you see that not yielding to a bad impulse is fighting ? The positive assertion of good, the shaping of beauty, the presentment of a fruitful thought in so desirable a light that other people go down with fresh courage into the dreariness and dullness of life, with all the delight of having a new way of behaving in their minds and hearts—that's how I want you to fight ! It requires the toughest sort of courage,

I can tell you. But instead of showing your spirit by returning a blow, show your spirit by propounding your idea in a finer shape. Don't be taken in by the silly and ugly old war-metaphors —the trumpet blown, the gathering of the hosts. That's simply a sensational waste of your time! Look out of your window, and then sit down to your work. That's the way to win, without noise or fuss."

LV

OF LIFE-FORCE

I WALKED one afternoon with Father Payne just as winter turned to spring, in the pastures. There was a mound at the corner of one of his fields, on which grew a row of beech trees of which Father Payne was particularly fond. He pointed out to me to-day how the most southerly of the trees, exposed as it was to the full force of the wind, grew lower and sturdier than the rest, and how as the trees progressed towards the north, each one profiting more by the shelter of his comrades, they grew taller and more graceful. "I like the way that stout little fellow at the end grows," said Father Payne. "He doesn't know, I suppose, that he is protecting the rest, and giving them room to expand. But he holds on: and though he isn't so tall, he is bulkier and denser than his brethren. He knows that he has to bear the brunt of the wind, so he puts out no sail. He just devotes himself to standing four-square—he is not going to be bullied! He would like to be as smooth and as

shapely as the rest, but he knows his own business, and he has adapted himself, like a sensible fellow, to his rough conditions."

A little later Father Payne stopped to look at a great sow-thistle that was growing vigorously under a hedge-row. "Did you ever see such a bit of pure force?" said Father Payne. "I see a fierce conscious life in every inch of that plant. Look at the way he clips himself in, and strains to the earth: look at his great rays of leaves, thrust out so geometrically from the centre, with the sharp, horny, uncompromising thorns. And see how he flattens down his leaves over the surrounding grasses: they haven't a chance; he just squeezes them down and strangles them. There is no mild and delicate waving of fronds in the air. He means to sit down firmly on the top of his comrades. I don't think I ever saw anything with such a muscular pull on—you can't lift his leaves up; look, he resists with all his might! Just consider the immense force which he is using: he is not merely snuggling down: he is just hauling things about. You don't mean to tell me that this thistle isn't conscious! He knows he has enemies, but he is going to make the place his very own—and all that out of a drifting little arrow of down!"

"Now that may not be a sympathetic or even Christian way of doing things," he went on presently, "but for all that, I do love to see the force of life, the intentness of living. I like our friend the beech a little better, because he is helping his friends, though he doesn't know it, and the thistle is only helping himself. But I am sure that it is the right way to go at it! We mustn't be always standing

aside and making room: we mustn't obliterate ourselves. We have a right to our joy in life, and we mustn't be afraid of it. If we give away what we have got, it must cost us something—it must not be a mere relinquishing."

"It is rather hard to combine the two principles," I said—"the living of life, I mean, and the giving away of life."

"Well, I think that devotion is better than self-sacrifice," said Father Payne. "On the whole I mistrust weakness more than I mistrust strength. It's easy to dislike violence—but I rather worship vitality. I would almost rather see a man forcing his way through with some callousness, than backing out, smiling and apologising. You can convert strength, you can't do anything with weakness. Take the sort of work you fellows do. I always feel I can chasten and direct exuberance: what I can't do is to impart vigour. If a man says his essay is short because he can't think of anything to write, I feel inclined to say, 'Then for goodness' sake hold your tongue!' It's the people who can't hold their tongue, who go on roughly pointing things out, and commenting, and explaining, and thrusting themselves in front of the show, who do something. Of course force has to be kept in order, but there it is—it lives, it must have its say. What you have to learn is to insinuate yourself into life, like ivy, but without spoiling other people's pleasure. That's liberty! The old thistle has no respect for liberty, and that is why he is rooted up. But it's rather sad work doing it, because he does so very much want to be alive. But it isn't liberty simply to efface yourself, because you

may interfere with other people. The thing is to fit in, without disorganising everything about you.'

He mused for a little in silence: then he said, "It's like almost everything else—it's a weighing of claims! I don't want you fellows to be either tyrannical or slavish. It's tyrannical to bully, it's slavish to defer. The thing is to have a firm opinion, not to be ashamed of it or afraid of it; to say it reasonably and gently, and to stick to it amiably. Good does not attack, though if it is attacked it can slay. Good fights evil, but it knows what it is fighting, while evil fights good and evil alike. I think that is true. I don't want you people to be controversial or quarrelsome in what you write, and to go in for picking holes in others' work. If you want to help a man to do better, criticise him privately—don't slap him in public, to show how hard you can lay on. Make your own points, explain if you like, but don't apologise. The great writers, mind you, are the people who can go on. It's volume rather than delicacy that matters in the end. It must flow like honey—good solid stuff—not drip like rain, out of mere weakness. But the thing is to flow, and largeness of production is better than little bits of overhandled work. Mind that, my boy! It's force that tells: and that's why I don't want you to be over-interested in your work. You must go on filling up with experience: but it doesn't matter where or how you get it, as long as it is eagerly done. Be on the side of life! *Amor fati*, that's the motto for a man—to love his destiny passionately, and all that is before him: not to droop, or sentimentalise, or submit, but to plunge on, like a

'sea-shouldering whale'! You remember old Kit Smart—

> 'Strong against tide, the enormous whale
> Emerges as he goes.'

"Mind you *emerge!* Never heed the tide: there's plenty of room for it as well as for you!"

LVI

OF CONSCIENCE

LESTRANGE was being genially bantered by Rose one day at dinner on what Rose called "problems of life and being," or "springs of action," or even "higher ground." Lestrange was oppressively earnest, but he was always good-natured.

"Ultimately?" he had said, "why, ultimately, of course, you must obey your conscience."

"No, no!" said Father Payne, "that won't do, Lestrange! Who are *you*, after all? I mean that the 'you' you speak of has something to say about it, to decide whether to disobey or to obey. And then, too, the same 'you' seems to have decided that conscience is to be obeyed. The thing that you describe as 'yourself' is much more ultimate than conscience, because if it is not convinced that conscience is to be obeyed, it will not obey. I mean that there is something which criticises even the conscience. It can't be reason, because your conscience over-rides your reason, and it can't be instinct, generally speaking, because conscience often over-rides instinct."

"I am confused," said Lestrange. "I mean by conscience the thing which says 'You *ought!*' That is what seems to me to prove the existence of God, that there is a sense of a moral law which one does not invent, and which is sometimes very inconveniently aggressive."

"Yes, that is all right," said Father Payne, "but how is it when there are two 'oughts,' as there often are? A man ought to work—and he ought not to overwork—something else has to be called in to decide where one 'ought' begins and the other ends. There is a perpetual balancing of moral claims. Your conscience tells you to do two things which are mutually exclusive—both are right in the abstract. What are you to do then?"

"I suppose that reason comes in there," said Lestrange.

"Then reason is the ultimate guide?" said Father Payne.

"Oh, Father, you are darkening counsel," said Lestrange.

"No, no," said Father Payne, "I am just trying to face facts."

"Well, then," said Lestrange, "what is the ultimate thing?"

"The ultimate thing," said Father Payne, "is of course the thing you call yourself—but the ultimate instinct is probably a sense of proportion —a sense of beauty, if you like!"

"But how does that work out in practice?" said Vincent. "It seems to me to be a mere argument about names and titles. You are using conscience as the sense of right and wrong, and, as you

say, they often seem to have conflicting claims. Lestrange used it in the further sense of the thing which ultimately decides your course. It is right to be philanthropic, it is right to be artistic—they may conflict; but something ultimately tells you what you *can* do, which is really more important than what you *ought to* do."

"That is right," said Father Payne. "I think the test is simply this—that whenever you feel yourself paralysed, and your natural growth arrested by your obedience to any one claim—instinct, reason, conscience, whatever it is—the ultimate power cuts the knot, and tells you unfailingly where your real life lies. That is the real failure, when owing to some habit, some dread, some shrinking, you do not follow your real life. That, it seems to me, is where the old unflinching doctrines of sin and repentance have done harm. The old self-mortifying saints, who thought so badly of human nature, and who tore themselves to pieces, resisting wholesome impulses—celibate saints who ought to have been married, morbidly introspective saints who needed hard secular work, those were the people who did not dare to trust the sense of proportion, and were suspicious of the call of life. Look at St. Augustine in the wonderful passage about light, 'sliding by me in unnumbered guises'—he can only end by praying to be delivered from the temptation to enjoy the sight of dawn and sunset, as setting his affections too much upon the things of earth. I mistrust the fear of life—I mistrust all fear—at least I think it will take care of itself, and must not be cultivated. I think the call of God is the call of joy—and I believe that

the superstitious dread of joy is one of the most potent agencies of the devil."

"But there are many joys which one has to mistrust," said Lestrange; "mere sensual delights, for instance."

"Yes," said Father Payne, "but most healthy and normal people, after a very little meddling with such delights, learn certainly enough that they only obscure the real, wholesome, temperate joys. You have to compromise wisely with your instincts, I think. You mustn't spend too much time in frontal attacks upon them. You have a quick temper, let us say. Well, it is better to lose it occasionally and apologise, than to hold your tongue about matters in which you are interested for fear of losing it. You are avaricious—well, hoard your money, and then yield on occasions to a generous impulse. That's a better way to defeat evil, than by dribbling money away in giving little presents which no one wants. I don't believe in petty warfare against faults. You know the proverb that if you knock too long at a closed door, the Devil opens it to you? Just give your sins a knock-down blow every now and then. I believe in the fire of life more than I believe in the cold water you use to quench it. Everything can be forgiven to passion; nothing can be forgiven to chilly calculation. The beautiful impulse is the thing that one must not disobey; and when I see people do big, wrong-headed, unguarded, unwise things, get into rows, sacrifice a reputation or a career without counting the cost, I am inclined to feel that they have probably done better for themselves than if they had been prudent and cautious.

I don't say that they are always right, because people yield sometimes to a mere whim, and sometimes to a childishly overwhelming desire; but if there is a real touch of unselfishness about a sacrifice—that's the test, that some one else's joy should be involved—then I feel that it isn't my business to approve or disapprove. I feel in the presence of a force—an 'ought' as Lestrange says, which makes me shy of intervening. It's the wind of the Spirit—it blows where it will—and I know this, that I'm thankful beyond everything when I feel it in my own sails."

"Tell me when you feel it next, Father," said Vincent.

"I feel it now," said Father Payne, "now and here." And there was something in his face which made us disinclined to ask him any further questions.

LVII

OF RANK

SOMEONE had been telling a curious story about a contested peerage. It was a sensational affair, involving the alteration of registers, the burning down of a vestry, and the flight of a clergyman.

"I like that story," said Father Payne, "and I like heraldry and rank and all that. It's decidedly picturesque. I enjoy the zigzagging of a title through generations. But the worst of it is that the most picturesque of all distinctions, like being the twentieth baron, let us say, in direct descent, is really of the nature of a stigma; a man

whose twentieth ancestor was a baron has no excuse for not being a duke."

"But what I don't like," said Rose, "is the awful sense of sanctity which some people have about it. I read a book the other day where the hero sacrificed everything in turn, a career, a fortune, an engagement to a charming girl, a reputation, and last of all an undoubted claim to an ancient barony. I don't remember exactly why he did all these things—it was noble, undoubtedly it was noble! But there was something which made me vaguely uncomfortable about the order in which he spun his various advantages."

"It's only a sense of beauty slightly awry," said Father Payne; "names are curiously sacred things—they often seem to be part of the innermost essence of a man. I confess I would rather change most things than change my name. I would rather shave my head, for instance."

"But my hero would have had to change his name if he had claimed the peerage," said Rose.

"Yes, but you see the title was his *right* name," said Father Payne; "he was only masquerading as a commoner, you must remember. Why I should value an ancient peerage is because I think it might improve my manners."

"Impossible!" said Vincent.

"Thank you," said Father Payne. "Yes, my manners are very good for a commoner—but I should like to be a little more in the grand style. I should like to be able to look long at a person, who said something of which I disapproved, and then change the subject. That would be fine! But I daren't do that now. Now I have to argue. Do

you remember in *Daniel Deronda*, Grandcourt's habit of looking stonily at smiling persons. I have often envied that! Whereas my chief function in life is looking smilingly at stony persons, and that's very bourgeois."

"We must show more animation," said Barthrop to his neighbour.

"I mean it!" said Father Payne, "but come, I won't be personal! Seriously, you know, the one thing I have admired in the very few great people I have ever met is the absence of embarrassment. They don't need to explain who they are, they haven't got to preface their statements of opinion by fragments of autobiography, to show their right to speak. It is convenient to feel that if people don't know who you are, they will feel slightly foolish afterwards when they discover, like the man who shook hands warmly with Queen Victoria, and said, "I know the face quite well, but I can't put a name to it." It did not show any pride of birth in the Queen to be extremely amused by the incident. But even more than that I admire the ease which people of that sort get by having had, from childhood onwards, to meet all sorts of persons, and to behave themselves, and to see that people do not feel shy or uncomfortable. I sometimes go about the village simply teeming with benevolence, and I pass some one, and can't think of anything to say. If I had the great manner, I should say, "Why, Tommy, is that you?" or some such human signal, which would not mean anything in particular, but would after all express exactly what is in my mind. But I can't just do that. I rack my brains for an *appropriate* remark,

because I am bourgeois, and have not the point of honour, as the French say. And by the time I have elaborated it, Tommy is gone, and Jack is passing, and I begin elaborating again; whereas I should simply add, if I were aristocratic, 'And that's you, Jack, isn't it?' That's the way to talk."

We all laughed; and Barthrop said, "Well, I must say, Father, that I have often envied you your power of saying something to everyone."

"I have spent more trouble on it than it is worth," said Father Payne; "and that's my point, that if I were only a great man, I should have learnt it all in childhood, and should not have to waste time over it at all. That's the best of rank; it's a device for saving trouble; it saves introduction and explanation and autobiography and elaborate civility, and makes people willing to be pleased by the smallest sign of affability. You may depend upon it that it was a very true instinct which made the Scotch minister pray that all might have honourable ancestors. It isn't a sacred thing, rank, and it isn't a magnificent thing—but it's a pleasant human sort of thing in the right hands. What is more, in these democratic days, it tends to make people of rank additionally anxious not to parade the fact—and I doubt if there is anything on the whole happier than having advantages which you don't want to parade—it gives a tranquil sort of contentment, and it removes all futile ambitions. To be, by descent, what a desperately industrious lawyer or a successful general feels himself amply rewarded for his toil by becoming, isn't nothing. I'm always rather suspicious of the people who

try to pretend that it is nothing at all. The rank is but the guinea stamp, of course. But after all the stamp is what makes it a guinea instead of an unnegotiable disc of metal!"

LVIII

OF BIOGRAPHY

FATHER PAYNE used often to say that he was more interested in biography than in any other form of art, and believed that there was a greater future before it than before any other sort of literature. "Just think," I remember his saying, "human portraiture—the most interesting thing in the world by far—what the novel tries to do and can't do!"

"What exactly do you mean by 'can't do'?" I said.

"Why, my boy," said Father Payne, "because we are all so horrified at the idea of telling the truth or looking the truth in the face. The novel accommodates human nature, patches it up, varnishes it, puts it in a good light: it may be artistic and romantic and poetical—but it hasn't got the beauty of truth. Life is much more interesting than any imaginative fricassee of it! These realistic fellows —they are moving towards biography, but they haven't got much beyond the backgrounds yet."

"But why shouldn't it be done?" I said. "There's Boswell's Johnson—why does that stand almost alone?"

"Why, think of all the difficulties, my boy,"

said Father Payne. "There's nothing like Boswell's Johnson, of course—but what a subject! There's nothing that so proves Boswell's genius —we mustn't forget that—as the other wretched stuff written about Johnson. There's a passage in Boswell, when he didn't see Johnson for a long time, and stuck in a few stories collected from other friends. They are awfully flat and flabby —they have all been rolled about in some one's mind, till they are as smooth as pebbles—some bits of the crudest rudeness, not worked up to— some knock-down schoolboy retorts which most civilised men would have had the decency to repress—and then we get back to the real Boswell again, and how fresh and lively it is!"

"But what are the difficulties you spoke of?" I said.

"Why, in the first place," said Father Payne, "a biography ought to be written *during* a man's life and not *after* it—and very few people will take the trouble to write things down day after day about anyone else, as Boswell did. If it waits till after a man's death, a hush falls on the scene —everyone is pious and sentimental. Of course, Boswell's life is inartistic enough—it wanders along, here a letter, there a lot of criticism, here a talk, there a reminiscence. It isn't arranged—it has no scheme: but how full of *zest* it is! And then you have to be pretty shameless in pursuing your hero, and elbowing other people away, and drawing him out: and you have to be prepared to be kicked and trampled upon, when the hero is cross: and then you have to be a considerable snob, and say what you really value and admire, however vulgar

it is. And then you must expect to be called hard names when the book appears. I was reading a review the other day of what seemed to me to be a harmless biography enough—a little frank and enthusiastic affair, I gathered: and the reviewer wrote in the style of Pecksniff, caddish and priggish at the same time: he called the man to task for botanising on his friend's grave—that unfortunate verse of Wordsworth's, you know—and he left the impression that the writer had done something indelicate and impious, and all with a consciousness of how high-minded he himself was.

"You ought to write a biography as though you were telling your tale in a friendly and gentle ear—you ought not to lose your sense of humour, or be afraid of showing your subject in a trivial or ridiculous light. Look at Boswell again—I don't suppose a more deadly case could be made out against any man, with perfect truth, than could be made out against Johnson. You could show him as brutal, rough, greedy, superstitious, prejudiced, unjust, and back it all up by indisputable evidence—but it's the balance, the net result, that matters! We have all of us faults; we know them, our friends know them—why the devil should not everyone know them? But then an interesting man dies, and everyone becomes loyal and sentimental. Not a word must be said which could pain or wound anyone. The friends and relations, it would seem, are not pained by the dead man's faults, they are only pained that other people should know them. The biography becomes a mixture of disinfectants and perfumes, as if it were all meant to hide some putrid thing. It's like what

Jowett said about a testimonial, 'There's a strong smell here of something left out!' We have hardly ever had anything but romantic biographies hitherto, and they all smell of something left out. There's a tribe somewhere in Africa who will commit murder if anyone tries to sketch them. They think it brings bad luck to be sketched, a sort of 'overlooking' as they say. Well that seems to be the sort of superstition that many people have about biographies, as if the departed spirit would be vexed by anything which isn't a compliment. I suppose it is partly this—that many people are ill-bred, glum, and suspicious, and can't bear the idea of their faults being recorded. They hate all frankness: and so when anything frank gets written, they talk about violating sacred confidences, and about shameless exposures. It is really that we are all horribly uncivilised, and can't bear to give ourselves away, or to be given away. Of course we don't want biographies of merely selfish, stupid, brutal, ill-bred men—but everyone ought to be thankful when a life can be told frankly, and when there's enough that is good and beautiful to make it worth telling.

"But, as I said, the thing can't be done, unless it is written to a great extent in a man's lifetime. Conversation is a very difficult thing to remember—it can't be remembered afterwards—it needs notes at the time: and few people's talk is worth recording: and even if it is, people are a little ashamed of doing it—there seems something treacherous about it: but it ought to be done, for all that! You don't want so very much of it—I don't suppose that Boswell has got down a

millionth part of all Johnson said—you just want specimens—enough to give the feeling of it and the quality of it. One doesn't want immensely long biographies—just enough to make you feel that you have seen a man and sat with him and heard him talk—and the kind of way in which he dealt with things and people. I'll tell you a man who would have made a magnificent biography —Lord Melbourne. He had a great charm, and a certain whimsical and fantastic humour, which made him do funny little undignified things, like a child. But every single dictum of Melbourne's has got something original and graceful about it —always full of good sense, never pompous, always with a delicious lightness of touch. The only person who took the trouble to put down Melbourne's sayings, just as they came out, was Queen Victoria —but then she was in love with him without knowing it: and in the end he got stuck into the heaviest and most ponderous of biographiies, and is lost to the world. Stale politics—there's nothing to beat them for dulness unutterable!"

"But isn't it an almost impossible thing," I said, "to expect a man who is a first-rate writer, with ambitions in authorship, to devote himself to putting down things about some interesting person with the chance of their never being published? Very few people would have sufficient self-abnegation for that."

"That's true enough," said Father Payne, "and of course it is a risk—a man must run the risk of sacrificing a good deal of his time and energy to recording unimportant details, perhaps quite uselessly, but with this possibility ahead of him, that

he may produce an immortal book—and I grant you that the infernal vanity and self-glorification of authors is a real difficulty in the way."

He was silent for a minute or two, and then he said: "Now, I'll tell you another difficulty, that at present people only want biographies of men of affairs, of big performers, men who have done things —I don't want that. I want biographies of people who wielded a charm of personality, even if they didn't *do* things—people, I mean, who deserve to live and to be loved.—Those are the really puzzling figures a generation later, the men who lived in an atmosphere of admiring and delighted friendship, radiating a sort of enchanting influence, having the most extravagant things said and believed about them by their friends, and yet never doing anything in particular. People, I mean, like Arthur Hallam, whose letters and remains are fearfully pompous and tiresome—and who yet had *In Memoriam* written about him, and who was described by Gladstone as the most perfect human being, physically, intellectually and morally, he had ever seen. Then there is Browning's Domett —the prototype of Waring—and Keats's friend James Rice, and Stevenson's friend Ferrier—that's a matchless little biographical fragment, Stevenson's letter about Ferrier—those are the sort of figures I mean, the men who charmed and delighted everyone, were brave and humorous, gave a pretty turn to everything they said—those are the roses by the wayside! They had ill-health some of them, they hadn't the requisite toughness for work, they even took to drink, or went to the bad. But they are the people of quality and tone, about whom

one wants to know much more than about sunburnt and positive Generals—the strong silent sort—or overworked politicians bent on conciliating the riff-raff. I don't want to know about men simply because they did honest work, and still less about men who never dared to say what they thought and felt. You can't make a striking picture out of a sense of responsibility! I'm not underrating good work—it's fine in every way, but it can't always be written about. There are exceptions, of course. Nelson and Wellington would have been splendid subjects, if anyone had really Boswellised them. But Nelson had a theatrical touch about him, and became almost too romantic a hero; while the Duke had a fund of admirable humour and almost grotesque directness of expression,—and he has never been half done justice to, though you can see from Lord Mahon's little book of *Table Talk* and Benjamin Haydon's *Diary*, and the letters to Miss J., what a rich affair it all might have been, if only there had been a perfectly bold, candid, and truthful biographer."

"But the charming people of whom you spoke," I said—"isn't the whole thing often too evanescent to be recorded?"

"Not a bit of it!" said Father Payne, "and these are the people we want to hear about, because they represent the fine flower of civilisation. If a man has a delightful friend like that, always animated, fresh, humorous, petulant, original, he couldn't do better than observe him, keep scraps of his talk, record scenes where he took a leading part, get the impression down. It may come to nothing, of course, but it may also come to some-

thing worth more than a thousand twaddling novels. The immense *use* of it—if one must think about the use—is that such a life might really show commonplace and ordinary people how to handle the simplest materials of life with zest and delicacy. Novels don't really do that—they only make people want to escape from middle-class conditions. What everyone is the better for seeing is not how life might conceivably be handled, but how it actually has been handled, freshly and distinctly, by someone in a commonplace milieu. Life isn't a bit romantic, but it is devilish interesting. It doesn't go as you want it to go. Sometimes it lags, sometimes it dances; and horrible things happen, often most unexpectedly. In the novel, everything has to be rounded off and led up to, and you never get a notion of the inconsequence of life. The interest of life is not what happens, but how it affects people, how they meet it, how they fly from it: the relief of a biography is that you haven't got to invent your setting and your character—all that is done for you: you have just got to select the characteristic things, and not to blur the things that you would have wished otherwise. For God's sake, let us get at the truth in books, and not use them as screens to keep the fire off, or as things to distract one from the depressing facts in one's bank-book. I welcome all this output of novels, because it at least shows that people are interested in life, and trying to shape it. But I don't want romance, and I don't want ugly and sensational realism either. That is only romance in another shape. I want real men and women—not from an autobiographical point of view, because that is

generally romantic too—but from the point of view of the friends to whom they showed themselves frankly and naturally, and without that infernal reticence which is not either reverence or chivalry, but simply an inability to face the truth, —which is the direct influence of the spirit of evil. If one of my young men turns out a good biography of an interesting person, however ineffective he was, I shall not have lived in vain. For, mind this —very few people's performances are worth remembering, while very many people's personalities are."

LIX

OF EXCLUSIVENESS

Rose told a story one night which amused Father Payne immensely. He had been up in town, and had sate next a Minister's wife, who had been very confidential. She had said to Rose that her husband had just been elected into a small dining-club well known in London, where the numbers were very limited, the society very choice, and where a single negative vote excluded a candidate. "I don't think," said the good lady, "that my husband has ever been so pleased at anything that has befallen him, not even when he was first given office—such a distinguished club—and so exclusive!"

Father Payne laughed loud and shrill. "That's human nature at its nakedest!" he said. "It's like Miss Tox, in *Dombey and Son*, you know, who, when Dombey asked her if the school she recommended was select, said, 'It's exclusion itself!'

What people love is the power of being able to *exclude*—not necessarily disagreeable people or tiresome people, but simply people who would like to be inside—

"'Loving not, hating not, just choosing so.'

"Those are the two great forces of society, you know—the exclusive force, and the inclusive force: the force that says, 'We few, we happy few, we band of brothers'; and the force which says, 'The more the merrier.' The exclusive force is represented by caste and class, by gentility and donnishness, by sectarianism and nationalism, and even by patriotism—and the inclusive force is represented by Walt Whitmanism and Christianity."

"But what about St. Paul's words," said Lestrange, "'Honour all men: love the brotherhood'?"

"That's an attempt to recognise both," said Father Payne, smiling. "Of course you can't love everyone equally—that's the error of democracy—democracy is really one of the exclusive forces, because it excludes the heroes—it is '*mundus contra Athanasium*,'—it is best illustrated by what the American democrat said to Charles Kingsley, 'My principle is "whenever you see a head above the crowd, hit it."' Democracy is, at its worst, the jealousy of the average man for the superior man."

"But which is the best principle?" said Vincent.

"Both are necessary," said Father Payne. "One must aim at inclusiveness, of course: and we must be quite certain that we exclude on the ground of qualities, and not on the ground of superficial differences. The best influences in the world arise

not from individuals but from groups—and there is no sort of reason why groups should spoil their intensive qualities by trying to admit outsiders. The strength of a group lies in the fact that one gets the sense of fellowship and common purpose, of sympathy and encouragement. A man who has to fight a battle single-handed is always tempted to wonder whether, after all, it is worth all the trouble and misunderstanding. But, on the other hand, you are at liberty to mistrust the men who say that they don't want to know people. Do you remember how Charles Lamb once said, 'I do hate the Trotters!' 'But I thought you didn't know them?' said someone. 'That's just it,' said Charles Lamb, 'I never can hate anyone that I know!' The best bred man is the man who finds it easy to get on with everybody on equal terms: but it's part of the snobbishness of human nature that exclusiveness is rather admired than otherwise. There's a delightfully exclusive woman in one of Henry James' novels, who refuses to be introduced to a family. She entirely declines, and the man who is anxious to effect the introduction says, 'I can't think why you object to them.' 'They are hopelessly vulgar,' says the incisive lady, 'and in this short life, that is enough!' But St. Paul's remark is really very good, because it means 'Treat everyone with courtesy—but reserve your fine affections for the inner circle, whose worth you really know!'—it's a better theory than that of the man who said, 'It is enough for me to be with those whom I love!' That's rather inhuman."

"Do you remember," said Barthrop, "the lines

in Tennyson's Guinevere, which sum up the knightly attributes?

> "'High thought, and amiable words,
> And courtliness, and the desire of fame,
> And love of truth, and all that makes a man.'"

"That's very interesting and curious!" said Father Payne. "Dear me, I had forgotten that —did Tennyson say that?—Come—let's have it again!"

Barthrop repeated the lines again.

"Now, that's the gentlemanly ideal of the sixties," said Father Payne, "and, good heavens, how offensive it sounds! The most curious part of it really is 'the desire of fame'—of course, a hundred years ago, no one made any secret of that! You remember Nelson's frank confession, made not once, but many times, that he pursued glory. 'Defeat—or Westminster Abbey'—didn't he say that?"

"But surely people pursue fame as much as ever?" said Vincent.

"I daresay," said Father Payne, "but it isn't now considered good taste to say so. You have got to pretend, at all events, that you wish to benefit humanity now-a-days. If a man had said to Ruskin or Carlyle, 'Why do you write all these books?' and they replied, 'It is because of my desire for fame,' it would have been thought vulgar. There's that odd story of Robert Browning, when he received an ovation at Oxford, and someone said to him, 'I suppose you don't care about all this,' he said, 'It is what I have waited for all my life!' I wonder if he *did* say it! I think he

must have done, because it is exactly the sort of thing that one is supposed not to say—and I confess I don't like it—it seems to me vain, and not proud. I don't mind a kind of pride—I think a a man ought to know what he is worth: but I hate vanity. Perhaps that's only because I haven't been a success myself."

"But mayn't you desire fame?" said Vincent. "It seems to me rather priggish to condemn it!"

"Many fine things sound priggish when they are said," said Father Payne. "But, to be frank, I don't think that a man ought to desire fame. I think he may desire to do a thing well. I don't think he ought to desire to do it better than other people. It is the wanting to beat other people which is low. Why not wish them to do it well too?"

"You mean that the difference between pride and vanity lies there?" said Barthrop.

"Yes, I do," said Father Payne, "and it is a pity that pride is included in the deadly sins, because the word has changed its sense. Pride used to mean the contempt of others—that's a deadly sin, if you like. It used to mean a ghastly sort of self-satisfaction, arrived at by comparison of yourself with others. But now to be called a proud man is a real compliment. It means that a man can't condescend to anything mean or base. We ought all to be proud—not proud *of* anything, because that is vulgar, but ashamed of doing anything which we know to be feeble or low. The Pharisee in the parable was vain, not proud, because he was comparing himself with other people. But it is all right to be grateful to God for having a

sense of decency, just as you may be grateful for having a sense of beauty. The hatefulness of it comes in when you are secretly glad that other people love indecency and ugliness."

"That is the exclusive feeling then?" said Barthrop.

"Yes, the bad kind of exclusiveness," said Father Payne—"the kind of exclusiveness which ministers to self-satisfaction. And that is the fault of the group when it becomes a coterie. The coterie means a set of inferior people, bolstering up each other's vanity by mutual admiration. In a coterie you purchase praise for your own bad work, by pretending to admire the bad work of other people. But the real group is interested, not in each other's fame, but in the common work."

"It seems to me confusing," said Vincent.

"Not a bit of it," said Father Payne; "we have to consider our limitations: we are limited by time and space. You can't know everybody and love everybody and admire everybody—and you can't sacrifice the joy and happiness of real intimacy with a few for a diluted acquaintance with five hundred people. But you mustn't think that your own group is the only one—that is the bad exclusiveness—you ought to think that there are thousands of intimate groups all over the world, which you could love just as enthusiastically as you love your own, if you were inside them: and then, apart from your own group, you ought to be prepared to find reasonable and amiable and companionable people everywhere, and to be able to put yourself in line with them. Why, good heavens, there are millions of possible friends in the world!

and one of my deepest and firmest hopes about the next world, so to speak, is that there will be some chance of communicating with them all at once, instead of shutting ourselves up in a frowsy room like this, smelling of meat and wine. I don't deny you are very good fellows, but if you think that you are the only fit and desirable company in the world for me or for each other, I tell you plainly that you are utterly mistaken. That's why I insist on your travelling about, to avoid our becoming a coterie."

"Then it comes to this," said Vincent drily, "that you can't be inclusive, and that you ought not to be exclusive?"

"Yes, that's exactly it!" said Father Payne. "You meant to shut me up with one of our patent Oxford epigrams, I know—and, of course, it is deuced smart! But put it the other way round, and it's all right. You can't help being exclusive, and you must try to be inclusive—that's the truth, with the Oxford tang taken out!"

We laughed at this, and Vincent reddened.

"Don't mind me, old man!" said Father Payne, "but try to make your epigrams genial instead of contemptuous—inclusive rather than exclusive. They are just as true, and the bitter flavour is only fit for the vitiated taste of Dons." And Father Payne stretched out a large hand down the table, and enclosed Vincent's in his own.

"Yes, it was a nasty turn," said Vincent, smiling. "I see what you mean."

"The world is a friendlier place than people know," said Father Payne. "We have inherited a suspicion of the unknown and the unfamiliar.

Don't you remember how the ladies in *The Mill on the Floss* mistrusted each other's recipes, and ate dry bread in other houses rather than touch jam or butter made on different methods. That is the old bad taint. But I think we are moving in the right direction. I fancy that the awakening may be very near, when we shall suddenly realise that we are all jolly good fellows, and wonder that we have been so blind."

"A Roman Catholic friend of mine," said Rose—"he is a priest—told me that he attended a clerical dinner the other day. The health of the Pope was proposed, and they all got up and sang, 'For he's a jolly good fellow!'"

There was a loud laugh at this. "I like that," said Father Payne, "I like their doing that! I expect that that is exactly what the Pope is! I should dearly love to have a good long quiet talk with him! I think I could let in a little light: and I should like to ask him if he enjoyed his fame, dear old boy: and whether he was interested in his work! 'Why, Mr. Payne, it's rather anxious work, you know, the care of all the churches'—I can hear him saying—'but I rub along, and the time passes quickly! though, to be sure, I'm not as young as I was once: and while I am on the subject, Mr. Payne, you look to me to be getting on in years yourself!' And then I should say 'Yes, your Holiness, I am a man that has seen trouble.' And he would say, 'I'm sorry to hear that! Tell me all about it!' That's how we should talk, like old friends, in a snug parlour in the Vatican, looking out on the gardens!"

LX

OF TAKING LIFE

I WAS walking with Father Payne one hot summer day upon a field-path he was very fond of. There was a copse, through the middle of which the little river, the Fyllot, ran. It was the boundary of the Aveley estate, and it here joined another stream, the Rode, which came in from the south. The path went through the copse, dense with hazels, and there was always a musical sound of lapsing waters hidden in the wood. The birds sang shrill in the thicket, and Father Payne said, "This is the juncture of Pison and Hiddekel, you know, rivers of Paradise. Aveley is Havilah, where the gold is good, and where there is bdellium, if we only knew where to look for it. I fancy it is rich in bdellium. I came down here, I remember, the first day I took possession. It was wonderful, after being so long among the tents of Kedar, to plant my flag in Havilah; I made a vow that day —I don't know if I have kept it!"

"What was that?" I said.

"Only that I would not get too fond of it all," said Father Payne, smiling, "and that I would share it with other people. But I have got very fond of it, and I haven't shared it. Asking people to stay with you, that they may see what a nice place you have to live in, is hardly sharing it. It is rather the other way—the last refinement of possession, in fact!"

"It's very odd," he went on, "that I should love

this little bit of the world so much as I do. It's called mine—that's a curious idea. I have got very little power over it. I can't prevent the trees and flowers from growing here, or the birds from nesting here, if they have a mind to do so. I can only keep human beings out of it, more or less. And yet I love it with a sort of passion, so that I want other people to love it too. I should like to think that after I am gone, some one should come here and see how exquisitely beautiful it is, and wish to keep it and tend it. That's what lies behind the principle of inheritance; it isn't the money or the position only that we desire to hand on to our children—it's the love of the earth and all that grows out of it; and possession means the desire of keeping it unspoiled and beautiful. I could weep at the idea of this all being swept away, and a bdellium-mine being started here, with a factory-chimney and rows of little houses; and yet I suppose that if the population increased, and the land was all nationalised, a great deal of the beauty of England would go. I hope, however, that the sense of beauty might increase too—I don't think the country people here have much notion of beauty. They only like things to remain as they know them. It's a fearful luxury really for a man like myself to live in a land like this, so full of old woodland and pasture, which is only possible under rich proprietors. I'm an abuse, of course. I have got a much larger slice of my native soil than any one man ought to have; but I don't see the way out. The individual can't dispossess himself—it's the system which is wrong."

He stopped in the middle of the copse, and said: "Did you ever see anything so perfectly lovely as this place? And yet it is all living in a state of war and anarchy. The trees and plants against each other, all fighting for a place in the sun. The rabbit against the grass, the bird against the worm, the cat against the bird. There's no peace here really—it's full of terrors! Only the stream is taking it easy. It hasn't to live by taking life, and the very sound of it is innocent."

Presently he said: "This is all cut down every five years. It's all made into charcoal and bobbins. Then the flowers all come up in a rush; then the copse begins to grow again—I never can make up my mind which is most beautiful. I come and help the woodmen when they cut the copse. That's pleasant work, you know, cutting and binding. I sometimes wonder if the hazels hate being slashed about. I expect they do; but it can't hurt them much, for up they come again. It's the right way to live, of course, to begin again the minute you are cut down to the roots, to struggle out to the air and sun again, and to give thanks for life. Don't you feel yourself as if you were good for centuries of living?"

"I'm not sure that I do," I said. "I don't feel as if I had quite got my hand in."

"Yes, that's all right for you, old boy," said Father Payne. "You are learning to live, and you are living. But an old fellow like me, who has got in the way of it, and has found out at last how good it is to be alive, has to realise that he has only got a fag-end left. I don't at all want to die; I've got my hands as full as they can hold of pretty

and delightful things; and I don't at all want to be cut down like the copse, and to have to build up my branches again. Yes," he added, pondering, "I used to think I should not live long, and I didn't much want to, I believe! But now—it's almost disgraceful to think how much I prize life, and how interesting I find it. Depend upon it, on we go! The only thing that is mysterious to me is why I love a place like this so much. I don't suppose it loves me. I suppose there isn't a beast or a bird, perhaps not a tree or a flower, in the place that won't be rather relieved when I go back home without having killed something. I expect, in fact, that I have left a track of death behind me in the grass—little beetles and things that weren't doing any harm, and that liked being alive. That's pretty beastly, you know, but how is one to help it? Then my affection for it is very futile. I can't establish a civilised system here; I can't prevent the creatures from eating each other, or the trees from crowding out the flowers. I can't eat or use the things myself, I can't take them away with me; I can only stand and yearn with cheap sentiment.

"And yet," he said after a moment, "there's something here in this bit of copse that whispers to me beautiful secrets—the sunshine among the stems, the rustle of leaves, the wandering breeze, the scent and coolness of it all! It is crammed with beauty; it is all trying to live, and glad to live. You may say, of course, that you don't see all that in it, and it is I that am abnormal. But that doesn't explain it away. The fact that I feel it is a better proof that it is there than the fact that you don't feel it is a proof that it isn't there!

The only thing about it that isn't beautiful to me is the fact that life can't live except by taking life—that there is no right to live; and that, I admit, is disconcerting. You may say to me, 'You old bully, crammed with the corpses of sheep and potatoes, which you haven't even had the honesty to kill for yourself, you dare to come here, and talk this stuff about the beauty of it all, and the joy of living. If all the bodies of the things you have consumed in your bloated life were piled together, it would make a thing as big as a whole row of ricks!' If you say that, I admit that you take the sentiment out of my sails!"

"But I don't say it," said I: "Who dies if Father Payne live?"

He laughed at this, and clapped me on the back. "You're in the same case as I, old man," he said, "only you haven't got such a pile of blood and bones to your credit! Here, we must stow this talk, or we shall become both humbugs and materialists. It's a puzzling business, talking! It leads you into some very ugly places!"

LXI

OF BOOKISHNESS

I WENT in to see Father Payne one morning about some work. He was reading a book with knitted brows: he looked up, gave a nod, but no smile, pointed to a chair, and I sate down: a minute or two later he shut the book—a neat enough little volume—with a snap, and skimmed it deftly from where he sate, into his large waste-paper basket.

This, by the way, was a curious little accomplishment of his,—throwing things with unerring aim. He could skim more cards across a room into a hat than anyone I have ever seen who was not a professed student of legerdemain.

"What are you doing?" I said—"such a nice little book!" I rose and rescued the volume, which was a careful enough edition of some poems and scraps of poems, posthumously discovered, of a well-known poet.

"Pray accept it with my kindest regards," said Father Payne. "No, I don't know that I *ought* to give it you. It is the sort of book I object to."

"Why?" I said, examining it—"it seems harmless enough."

"It's the wrong sort of literature," said Father Payne. "There isn't time, or there ought not to be, to go fumbling about with these old scraps. They aren't good enough to publish—and what's more, if the man didn't publish them himself, you may be sure he had very good reasons for *not* doing so. The only interest of them is that so good a poet could write such drivel, and that he knew it was drivel sufficiently well not to publish it. But the man who can edit it doesn't know that, and the critics who review it don't know it either—it was a respectful review that made me buy the rubbish—and as for the people who read it, God alone knows what they think of it. It's a case of

> "'Weave a circle round him thrice,
> And close your eyes in holy dread.'

"You have to shut your eyes pretty tight not to see what bosh it all is—it is all this infernal re-

verence paid by people, who have no independence of judgment, to great reputations. It reminds me of the barber who used to cut the Duke of Wellington's hair and nails, who made quite a lot of money by selling clippings to put in lockets!"

"But isn't it worth while to see a great poet's inferior jottings, and to grasp how he worked?" said I.

"No," said Father Payne;—"at least it would be worth while to see how he brought off his good strokes, but it isn't worth while seeing how he missed his stroke altogether. This deification business is all unwholesome. In art, in life, in religion, in literature, it's a mistake to worship the saints—you don't make them divine, you only confuse things, and bring down the divine to your own level. The truth—the truth—why can't people see how splendid it is, and that it is one's only chance of getting on! To shut your eyes to the possibility of the great man having a touch of the commonplace, a touch of the ass, even a touch of the knave in him, doesn't ennoble your conception of human nature. If you can only glorify humanity by telling lies about it, and by ruling out all the flaws in it, you end by being a sentimentalist. "See thou do it not . . . worship God!" that's one of the finest things in the Bible. Of course it is magnificent to see a streak of the divine turning up again and again in human nature—but you have got to wash the dirt to find the diamond. Believe in the beauty behind and in and beyond us all—but don't worship the imperfect thing. This sort of book is like selling the dirt out of which the diamonds have been washed, and which would

appear to have gained holiness by contact. I hate to see people stopping short on the symbol and the illustration, instead of passing on to the truth behind—it's idolatry. It's one degree better than worshipping nothing; but the danger of idolatry is that you are content to get no further: and that is what makes idolatry so ingenious a device of the devil, that it persuades people to stop still and not to get on."

"But aren't you making too much out of it?" I said. "At the worst, this is a harmless literary blunder, a foolish bit of hero-worship?"

"Yes," said Father Payne, "in a sense that is true, that these little literary hucksters and pedlars don't do any very great harm—I don't mean that they cause much mischief: but they are the symptom of a grave disease. It is this d—d *bookishness* which is so unreal. I would like to say a word about it to you, if you have time, instead of doing our work to-day—for if you will allow me to say so, my boy, you have got a touch of it about you—only a touch—and I think if I can show you what I mean, you can throw it off—I have heard you say rather solemn things about books! But I want you to get through that. It reminds me of the talk of ritualists. I have a poor friend who is a very harmless sort of parson—but I have heard him talk of a bit of ceremonial with tears in his eyes. 'It was exquisite, exquisite,' he will say,—'the celebrant wore a cope—a bit, I believe of genuine pre-Reformation work—of course re-mounted—and the Gospeller and Epistoller had copes so perfectly copied that it would have been hard to say which was the real one. And then

Father Wynne holds himself so nobly—such a mixture of humility and pride—a priest ought to exhibit both, I think, at that moment?—and his gestures are so inevitable—so inevitable—that's the only word: there's no sense of rehearsal about it: it is just the supreme act of worship expressing itself in utter abandonment'—He will go on like that for an hour if he can find a great enough goose to listen to him. Now, I don't mean to say that the man hasn't a sense of beauty—he has the real ritual instinct, a perfectly legitimate branch of art. But he doesn't know it's art—he thinks it is religion. He thinks that God is preoccupied with such things; 'a full choral High Mass, at nine o'clock, that's a thing to live and die for,' I have heard him say. Of course it's a sort of idealism, but you must know what you are about, and what you are idealising: and you mustn't think that your kind is better than any other kind of idealising."

He made a pause, and then held out his hand for the book.

"Now here is the same sort of intemperate rapture," he said. "Look at this introduction! 'It is his very self that his poems give, and the sharpest jealousy of his name and fame is enkindled by them. Not to find him there, his passion, endurance, faith, rapture, despair, is merely a confession of want in ourselves.' That's not sane, you know—it's the intoxication of the Corybant! It isn't the man himself we want to fix our eyes upon. He felt these things, no doubt: but we mustn't worship his raptures—we must worship what he worshipped. This sort of besotted agita-

tion is little better than a dancing dervish. The poems are little sparks, struck out from a scrap of humanity by some prodigious and glorious force: but we must worship the force, not the spark: the spark is only an evidence, a system, a symbol if you like, of the force. And then see how utterly the man has lost all sense of proportion—he has spent hours and days in identifying with uncommon patience the exact date of these tepid scraps, and he says he is content to have laid a single stone in the "unamended, unabridged, authentic temple," of his idol's fame. That seems to me simply degrading: and then the portentous ass, whose review I read, says that if the editor had done nothing else, he is sure of an honoured place for ever in the hierarchy of impeccable critics! And what is all this jabber about—a few rhymes which a man made when he was feeling a little off colour, and which he did not think it worth while to publish!

"You mustn't get into this kind of a mess, my boy. The artist mustn't indulge in emotion for the sake of the emotion. 'The weakness of life,' says this pompous ass, 'is that it deviates from art!' You might just as well say that the weakness of food was that it deviated from a well-cooked leg of mutton! Art is just an attempt to disentangle something, to get at one of the big constituents of life. It helps you to see clearly, not to confuse one thing with another, not to be vaguely impressed—the hideous danger of bookishness is that it is one of the blind alleys into which people get. These two fellows, the editor and his critic, have got stuck there: they can't see out: they think their little valley is the end of the world. I

expect they are both of them very happy men, as happy as a man who goes to bed comfortably drunk. But, good God, the awakening!" Father Payne relapsed into a long silence, with knitted brows. I tried to start him afresh.

"But you often tell us to be serious, to be deadly earnest, about our work?" I said.

"Oh yes," said Father Payne, "that's another matter. We have to work hard, and put the best of ourselves into what we do. I don't want you to be an amiable dilettante. But I also want you to see past even the best art. You mustn't think that the stained-glass window is the body of heaven in its clearness. The sort of worshippers I object to are the men who shut themselves up in a church, and what with the colour and the music and the incense-smoke, think they are in heaven already. It's an intoxication, all that. I don't get you men to come here to make you drunk, but to get you to loathe drunkenness. God—that's the end of it all! God, who reveals Himself in beauty and kindness, and trustfulness, and charm and interest, and in a hundred pure and fine forces—yet each of them are but avenues which lead up to Him, the streets of the city, full of living water. But it is movement I am in search of—and I would rather be drowned in the depth of the sea than mislead anyone, or help him to sit still. I have made an awful row about it all," said Father Payne, relapsing into a milder mood—"But you will forgive me, I know. I can't bear to see these worthy men blocking the way with their unassailable, unabridged, authentic editions. They are like barbed-wire entanglements: and the worst of it

is that, in spite of all their holy air of triumph, they enjoy few things more than tripping each other up! They condemn each other to eternal perdition for misplacing a date or misspelling a name. It's like getting into a bed of nettles to get in among these little hierophants. They remind me of the bishops at some ancient Church Council or other who tore the clothes off two right reverend consultants, and literally pulled them limb from limb in the name of Christ. That's the end of these holy raptures, my boy! They unchain the beast within."

LXII

OF CONSISTENCY

THERE had been a little vague talk about politics, and someone had quoted a definition of a true Liberal as a man who, if he had only to press a button in a dark room to annihilate all cranks, faddists, political quacks, extremists, propagandists, and nostrum-mongers, would not dream of doing so, as a matter of conscience, on the ground that everyone has a right to hold his own beliefs and to persuade the world to accept them if he can. Father Payne laughed at this; but Rose, who had been nettled, I fancy, at a lack of deference for his political experience, his father being a Unionist M.P., said loudly, "Hear, hear! that's the only sort of Liberal whom I respect."

A look of sudden anger passed over Father Payne's face—unmistakable and uncompromising wrath. "Come, Rose," he said, "this isn't a political meet-

ing; and even if it were, why proclaim yourself as accepting a definition which is almost within the comprehension of a chimpanzee?"

There was a faint laugh at this, but everyone had an uncomfortable sense of thunder in the air. Rose got rather white, and his nostrils expanded. "I'm sorry I put it in that way," he said rather frostily, "if you object. But I mean it, I think. I don't like diluted Liberalism."

"Yes, but you beg the question by calling it diluted," said Father Payne. "If anyone had said that the only Tory he respected was a man who if he could press a button in a still darker room, and by doing so bring it to pass that all institutions on the face of the earth would remain immutably fixed for ever and ever, and would feel himself bound conscientiously to do it, you wouldn't accept that as a definition of Conservatism? These things are not hard and fast matters of principle—they are only tendencies. Toryism is an instinct to trust custom and authority, Liberalism is an instinct to welcome development and change. All that the definition of Liberalism which was quoted means is, that the Liberal has a deep respect for freedom of opinion; and all that my grotesque definition of Toryism means is that a Tory prefers to trust a fixed tradition. But, of course, both want a settled Government, and both have to recognise that the world and its conditions change. The Tory says, 'Look before you leap'; the Liberal says, 'Leap before you look.' But it is really all a matter of infinite gradations, and what differentiates people is merely their idea of the pace at which things can go and ought to go. Why should you say that you can only respect a man who

wants to go at sixty miles an hour, any more than I should say I can only respect a man who wants to remain absolutely still ? "

Rose had by this time recovered his temper, and said, " It was rather crude, I admit. But what I meant was that if a man feels that all opinions are of equal value, he must give full weight to all opinions. The doctrinaire Liberal seems to me to be just as much inclined to tyrannise as the doctrinaire Tory, and to use his authority on the side of suppression when it is convenient to do so, and against all his own principles."

" I don't think that is quite fair," said Father Payne. " You must have a working system ; you can't try everyone's experiments. All that the Liberal says is, ' Persuade us if you can.' Pure Liberalism would be anarchy, just as pure Toryism would be tyranny. Both are intolerable. But just as the Liberal has to compromise and say, ' This may not be the ultimate theory of the Government, but meanwhile the world has to be governed,' so the Tory has to compromise, if a large majority of the people say, ' We will not be governed by a minority for their interest ; we will be governed for our own.' The parliamentary vote is just a way of avoiding civil war ; you can't always resort to force, so you resort to arbitration. But why the Liberal position is on the whole the stronger is because it says frankly, ' If you Tories can persuade the nation to ask you to govern it, we will obey you.' The weakness of the Tory position is that it has to make exactly the same concessions, while it claims to be inspired by a divine sort of knowledge as to what is just and right. I personally mistrust all intuitions which lead to

tyranny. Of course, the weakness of the whole affair is that the man who believes in democracy has to assume that all have equal rights; that would be fair enough if all people were born equal in character and ability, and influence and wealth. But that isn't the case; and so the Liberal says, 'Democracy is a bad system perhaps, but it is the only system,' and it is fairer to maintain that everyone who gets into the world has as good a right as anyone else to be there, than it is to say, 'Some people have a right to manage the world and some have only a duty to obey.' Both represent a side of the truth, but neither represents the whole truth. At worst Liberalism is a combination of the weak against the strong, and Toryism a combination of the strong against the weak! I personally wish the weak to have a chance; but what we all really desire is to be governed by the wise and good, and my hope for the world is that the quality of it is improving. I want the weak to become sensible and self-restrained, and the strong to become unselfish and disinterested. It is generosity that I want to see increase—it is the finest of all qualities—the desire, I mean to serve others, to admire, to sympathise, to share, to rejoice, in other people's happiness. That would solve all our difficulties."

"Yes, of course," said Rose. "But I would like to go back again, and say that what I was praising was consistency."

"But there is no such thing," said Father Payne, "except in combination with entire irrationality. One can't say at any time of one's life, 'I know everything worth knowing. I am in a position to form a final judgment.' You can say, 'I will shut off all

fresh light from my mind, and I will consider no further evidence,' but that isn't a thing to respect! I begin to suspect, Rose, that why you praised the uncompromising Liberal, as you call him, is because he is the only kind of opponent who isn't dangerous. A man who takes up such a position as I have described is practically insane. He has a fixed idea, which neither argument nor evidence can alter. The uncompromising man of fixed opinions, whatever those opinions may be, is almost the only man I do not respect, because he is really the only inconsistent person. He says, 'I have formed an opinion which is based on experience, and I shall not alter it.' That is tantamount to saying that you have done with experience; it is a claim to have attained infallibility through fallible faculties. Where is the dignity of that? It's just a deification of stupidity and stubbornness and insolence and complacency."

"But you must take your stand on *some* certainties," said Rose.

"The fewer the better," said Father Payne. "One may learn to discriminate between things, and to observe differences; but that is very different from saying that you have got at the ultimate essence of any one thing. I am all for clearness—we ought not to confuse things with each other, or use the same names for different things; but I'm all against claiming absolute and impeccable knowledge. It may be a comfortable system for a man who doesn't want to be bothered; but he is only deferring the bother—he is like a man who stays in bed because he doesn't like dressing. But it isn't a solution to stay in bed—it is only suspending the solution. No, we mustn't have any regard for human consistency

—it's a very paltry attribute; it's the opposite of anthropomorphism. That makes out God to be in the image of man, but consistency claims for man the privilege of God. And that isn't wholesome, you know, either for a man or his friends!"

"I give up," said Rose: "can nothing be logical?"

"Hardly anything," said Father Payne, "except logic itself. You have to coin logical ideas into counters to play with. No two things, for instance, can ever be absolutely equal, except imaginary equalities—and that's the mischief of logic applied to life, that it presumes an exact valuation of the ideas it works with, when no two people's valuations of the same idea are identical, and even one person's valuation varies from time to time; and logic breeds a phantom sort of consistency which only exists in the imagination. You know the story of how Smith and Jones were arguing, and Smith said, 'Brown will agree with me': 'Yes,' said Jones triumphantly, 'he will, but for my reasons!'"

LXIII

OF WRENS AND LILIES

It was the first warm and sunny day, after a cold and cloudy spring: I took a long and leisurely walk with Father Payne down a valley among woods, of which Father Payne was very fond. "Almost precipitous for Northamptonshire, eh?" he used to say. I was very full of a book I had been reading, but I could not get him to talk. He made vague and foolish replies, and said several

times, "I shall have to think that over, you know," which was, I well knew, a polite intimation that he was not in a mood for talk. But I persisted, and at last he said, "Hang it, you know, I'm not attending—I'm very sorry—it isn't your fault—but there's such a lot going on everywhere." He quoted a verse of *The Shropshire Lad*, of which he was very fond:

> "'Now, of my threescore years and ten,
> Twenty will not come again,
> And take from seventy springs a score,
> It only leaves me fifty more'";

adding, "That's the only instance I know of a subtraction sum made into perfect poetry—but it's the other way round, worse luck!

> "And *add* to seventy springs a score,
> *That* only leaves me forty more!"

The birds were singing very sweetly in the copses as we passed—"That isn't art, I believe," said Father Payne. "It's only the reproductive instinct, I am told! I wish it took such an artistic form in my beloved brothers in the Lord! There," he added, stopping and speaking in a low tone; "don't move—there's a cock-wren singing his love-song—you can see his wings quivering." There followed a little tremolo, with four or five emphatic notes for a finish. "Now, if you listen, you'll hear the next wren answer him!" said Father Payne. In a moment the same little song came like an echo from a bush a few yards away. "The wren sings in stricter time than any bird but the cuckoo," said Father Payne—"four quavers to a

bar. That's very important! Those two ridiculous creatures will go on doing that half the morning. They are so excited that they build sham nests, you know, about now—quite useless piles of twigs and moss, not intended for eggs, just to show what they can do. But that little song! It has all the passion of the old chivalry in it—it is only to say, 'My Dulcinea is prettier, sweeter, brighter-eyed than yours!' and the other says, 'You wait till I can get at you, and then we will see!' If they were two old knights, they would fight to the death over it, till the world had lost a brave man, and one of the Dulcineas was a hapless widow, and nothing proved. That's the sort of thing that men admire, full of fine sentiment. Why can't we leave each other alone? Why does loving one person make you want to fight another? Just look at that wren: he's as full of joy and pride as he can hold: look at the angle at which he holds his tail: he feels the lord of the world, sure enough!"

We walked on, and I asked no more questions. "There's a bit of colour," said Father Payne, pointing to a bare wood, all carpeted with green blades. "That's pure emerald, like the seventh foundation of the city. Now, if I ask you, who are a bit of a poet, what those leaves are, what do you say? You say hyacinth or daffodil, or perhaps lily-of-the-valley. But what does the simple botanist—that's me—say? Garlic, my boy, and nothing else! and you had better not walk musing there, or you will come in smelling of spring onions, like a greengrocer's shop. So much for poetry! It's the loveliest green in creation, and it has a pretty flower too—but it's never once mentioned

in English poetry, so far as I know. And yet Keats had the face to say that Beauty was Truth and Truth Beauty! That's the way we play the game."

We rambled on, and passed a pleasant old stone-built cottage in the wood, with a tiny garden. "It's a curious thing," said Father Payne, "but in the spring I always want to live in all the houses I see. It's the nesting instinct, no doubt. I think I could be very happy here, for instance—much happier than in my absurd big house, with all you fellows about. Why did I ever start it? I ought to have had more sense. I want a cottage like this, and a little garden to work in, and a few books. I would live on bread and cold bacon and cheese and cabbages, with a hive of my own honey. I should get wise and silent, and not run on like this."

A dog came out of the cottage garden, and followed us a little way. "Do we belong to your party, sir, or do you belong to ours?" said Father Payne. The dog put his head on one side, and wagged his tail. "It appears I have the pleasure of your acquaintance!" said Father Payne to him. "Very well, you can set us on our way if you like!" The dog gave a short shrill bark, and trotted along with us. When we got to the end of the lane, where it turned into the high road, Father Payne said to the dog, "Now, sir, I expect that's all the time you can spare this morning? You must go back and guard the house, and be a faithful dog. Duty first!" The dog looked mournfully at us, and wagged his tail, but did not attempt to come farther. He watched us for a little longer, but as we did not invite him to come on, he presently

turned round and trotted off home. "Now, that's the sort of case where I feel sentimental." said Father Payne. "It's the sham sort of pathos. I hate to see anyone disappointed. A person offering flowers in the street for sale, and people not buying them—the men in London showing off little toys by the pavement, which nobody wants—I can't bear that. It makes me feel absurdly wretched to see anyone hoping to please, and not pleasing. And if the people who do it look old and frail and unhappy, I'm capable of buying the whole stock. The great uncomforted! It's silly, of course, and there is nothing in the world so silly as useless emotion! It is so easy to overflow with cheap benevolence, but the first step towards the joyful wisdom is to be afraid of the emotion that costs you nothing: but we won't be metaphysical to-day!"

Presently Father Payne insisted on sitting down in a sheltered place. He flung his hat off, and sate there, looking round him with a smile, his arms clasped round his big knees. "Well," he said, "it's a jolly place, the old world, to be sure! Plenty of nasty and ugly things, I suppose, going on in corners; but if you look round, they are only a small percentage of the happy things. They don't force themselves upon the eye and ear, the beastly things: and it's a stupid and faithless mistake to fix the imagination and the reason too much upon them. We are all of us in a tight place occasionally, and we have to meet it as best we can. But I don't think we do it any better by anticipating it beforehand. What is more, no one can really help us or deliver us: we can be made a

little more comfortable, and that's all, by what they call cooling drinks, and flowers in a vase by the bedside. And it's a bad thing to get the misery of the world in a vague way on our nerves. That's the useless emotion. We have got certain quite definite things to do for other people in our own circle, and we are bound to do them; we mustn't shirk them, and we mustn't shirk our own troubles, though the less we bother about them the better. I am not at all sure that the curse of the newspapers is not that they collect all the evils of the world into a hideous posy, and thrust it under our nose. They don't collect the fine, simple, wholesome things. Now you and I are better employed to-day in being agreeable to each other—at least you are being kind to me, even though I can't talk about that book—and in looking at the delightful things going on everywhere—just think of all the happiness in the world to-day, symbolised by that ridiculous wren!—we are better employed, I say, than if we were extending the commerce of England, or planning how to make war, or scolding people in sermons about their fatal indifference to the things that belong to their peace. Men and women must find and make their own peace, and we are doing both to-day. That awful vague sense of responsibility, that desire to interfere, that wish that everyone else should do uncomplainingly what we think to be their duty—that's all my eye! It is the kindly, eager, wholesome life which affects the world, wherever it is lived: and that is the best which most of us can do. We can't be always fighting. Even the toughest old veteran soldier —how many hours of his life has he spent actually

under fire? No, I'm not forgetting the workers either: but you need not tell me that they are all sick at heart because they are not dawdling in a country lane. It would bore them to death, and they can live a very happy life without it. That's the false pathos again—to think that everyone who can't do as *we* like must be miserable. And anyhow, I have done my twenty-five years on the treadmill, and I am not going to pretend it was noble work, because it wasn't. It was useless and disgraceful drudgery, most of it!"

"Ah," I said, "but that doesn't help me. You may have earned a holiday, but I have never done any real drudgery—I haven't earned anything."

"Be content," said Father Payne; "take two changes of raiment! You have got your furrow to plough—all in good time! You are working hard now, and don't let me hear any stuff about being ashamed because you enjoy it! The reward of labour is life: to enjoy our work is the secret. If you could persuade people that the spring of life lies there, you would do more for the happiness of man than by attending fifty thousand committees. But I won't talk any more. I want to consider the lilies of the field, how they grow. They don't do it every day!"

LXIV

OF POSE

SOMEONE said rashly, after dinner to-night, that the one detestable and unpardonable thing in a man was pose. A generalisation of this kind acted

on Father Payne very often like a ferret on a rabbit. He had been mournfully abstracted during dinner, shaking his head slowly, and turning his eyes to heaven when he was asked leading questions. But now he said: "I don't think that is reasonable—you might as well say that you always disliked length in a book. A book has got to be some length—it is as short as it's long. Of course, the moment you begin to say, 'How long this book is!' you mean that it is too long, and excess is a fault. Do you remember the subject proposed in a school debating society, 'That too much athletics is worthy of our admiration'? Pose is like that—when you become conscious of pose it is generally disagreeable—that is, if it is meant to deceive: but it is often amusing too, like the pose of the unjust judge in the parable, who prefaces his remarks by saying, 'Though I fear not God, neither regard man.'"

"Oh, but you know what I mean, Father," said the speaker, "the pose of knowing when you don't know, and being well-bred when you are snobbish, and being kind when you are mean, and so on."

"I think you mean humbug rather than pose," said Father Payne; "but even so, I don't agree with you. I have a friend who would be intolerable, but for his pose of being agreeable. He isn't agreeable, and he doesn't feel agreeable; but he behaves as if he was, and it is the only thing that makes him bearable. What you really mean is the pose of superiority—the man whose motives are always just ahead of your own, and whose taste is always slightly finer, and who knows the world a little better. But there is a lot of pose that isn't

that. What *is* pose, after all? Can anyone define it?"

"It's an artist's phrase, I think," said Barthrop; "it means a position in which you look your best."

"Like the Archbishop who was always painted in a gibbous attitude—first quarter, you know—with his back turned to you, and his face just visible over his lawn sleeve," said Father Payne, "but that was in order to hide an excrescence on his left cheek. Do you remember what Lamb said of Barry Cornwall's wen on the nape of his neck? Some one said that Barry Cornwall was thinking of having it cut off. 'I hope he won't do that,' said Lamb, 'I rather like it—it's redundant, like his poetry!' I rather agree with Lamb. I like people to be a little redundant, and a harmless pose is pure redundancy: it only means that a man is up to some innocent game or other, some sort of mystification, and is enjoying himself. It's like a summer haze over the landscape. Now, there's another friend of mine who was once complimented on his 'uplifted' look. Whenever he thinks of it, and that's pretty often, he looks uplifted, like a bird drinking, with his eyes fixed on some far-off vision. I don't mind that! It's only a wish to look his best. It's partly a wish to give pleasure, you know. It's the same thing that makes people wear their hair long, or dress in a flamboyant way. I'll tell you a little story. You know Bertie Nash, the artist. I met him once in a Post Office, and he was buying a sheet of halfpenny stamps. I asked him if he was going to send out some circulars. He looked at me sadly, and said, 'No, I always use

these—I can't use the penny stamps—such a crude red!' Now, he didn't do that to impress me: but it was a pose in a way, and he liked feeling so sensitive to colour."

"But oughtn't one to avoid all that sort of nonsense?" said some one; "it's better surely to be just what you are."

"Yes, but what *are* you, after all?" said Father Payne; "your moods vary. It would be hopeless if everyone tried to keep themselves down to their worst level for the sake of sincerity. The point is that you ought to try to keep at your best level, even if you don't feel so. Hang it, good manners are a pose, if it comes to that. The essence of good manners is sometimes to conceal what you are feeling. Is it a pose to behave amiably when you are tired or cross?"

"No, but that is in order not to make other people uncomfortable," said Vincent.

"Well, it's very hard to draw the line," said Father Payne: "but what we really mean by pose is, I imagine, the attempt to appear to be something which you frankly are not—and that is where the word has changed its sense, Barthrop. An artist's pose is something characteristic, which makes a man look his best. What we generally mean by pose is the affecting a best which one never reaches. Come, tell a story, some one! That's the best way to get at a quality. Won't some one quote an illustration?"

"What about my friend Pearce, the schoolmaster?" said Vincent. "He read a book about schoolmastering, and he said he didn't think much of it. He added that the author seemed only

to be giving elegant reasons for doing things which the born schoolmaster did by instinct."

"Well, that's not a bad criticism," said Father Payne; "but it was pose if he meant to convey that *he* was a born schoolmaster. Is he one, by the way?"

"No," said Vincent, "he is not: he is much ragged by the boys; but he comforts himself by thinking that all schoolmasters are ragged, but that he is rather more successful than most in dealing with it. He has a great deal of moral dignity, has Pearce! I don't know where he would be without it!"

"Well, there's an instance," said Father Payne, "of a pose being of some use. I think a real genuine pose often makes a man do better work in the world than if he was drearily conscious of failure. It's a game, you know—a dramatic game: and I think it's a sign of vitality and interest to want to have a game. It's like the lawyer's clerk in *Our Mutual Friend*, when Mr. Boffin calls to keep an appointment, being the lawyer's only client; but the boy makes a show of looking it all up in a ledger, runs his finger down a list of imaginary consultants, and says to himself, 'Mr. Aggs, Mr. Baggs, Mr. Caggs, Mr. Daggs, Mr. Boffin—Yes, sir, that is right!' Now there's no harm in that sort of thing—it's only a bit of moral dignity, as Vincent says. It's no good acquiescing in being a humble average person—we must do better than that! Most people believe in themselves in spite of abundant evidence to the contrary—but it's better than disbelieving in yourself. That's abject, you know."

"But if you accept the principle of pose," said

Lestrange, "I don't see that you can find fault with any pose."

"You might as well say," said Father Payne, "that if I accept the principle of drinking alcohol, it doesn't matter how much I drink! Almost all morality is relative—in fact, it is doubtful if it is ever absolute. The mischief of pose is not when it makes a man try to be or to appear at his best: but when a man lives a thoroughly unreal life, taking a high line in theory and never troubling about practice, then it's incredible to what lengths self-deception can go. Dr. Johnson said that he looked upon himself as a polite man! It is quite easy to get to believe yourself impeccable in certain points: and as one gets older, and less assailable, and less liable to be pulled up and told the hard truth, it is astonishing how serenely you can sail along. But that isn't pose exactly. It generally begins by a pose, and becomes simple imperviousness: and that is, after all, the danger of pose,—that it makes people blind to the truth about themselves."

"I'm getting muddled," said Vincent.

"It *is* rather muddling," said Father Payne, "but, in a general way, the point is this. When pose is a deliberate attempt to deceive other people for your own credit, it is detestable. But when it is merely harmless drama, to add to the interest of life and to retain your own self-respect, it's an amiable foible, and need not be discouraged. The real question is whether it is assumed seriously, or whether it is all a sort of joke. We all like to play our little games, and I find it very easy to forgive a person who enjoys dressing up, so to speak,

and making remarks in character. Come, I'll confess my sins in public. If I meet a stranger in the roads, I rather like to be thought a bluff and hearty English squire, striding about my broad acres. I prefer that to being thought a retired crammer, a dominie who keeps a school and calls it an academy, as Lord Auchinleck said of Johnson. But if I pretended in this house to be a kind of abbot, and glided about in a cassock with a gold cross round my neck, conferring a benediction on everyone, and then retired to my room to read a French novel and to drink whisky-and-soda, that would be a very unpleasant pose indeed!"

We all implored Father Payne to adopt it, and he said he would give it his serious consideration.

LXV

OF REVENANTS

I WAS sitting in the garden one evening in summer with Father Payne and Barthrop. Barthrop was going off next day to Oxford, and was trying to persuade Father Payne to come too.

"No," he said, "I simply couldn't! Oxford is the city east of the sun and west of the moon —like as a dream when one awaketh! I don't hold with indulging fruitless sentiment, particularly about the past."

"But isn't it rather a pity?" said Barthrop. "After all, most emotions are useless, if you come to that! Why should you cut yourself off from a place you are so fond of, and which is quite the

most beautiful place in England too? Isn't it rather—well,—weak?"

"Yes," said Father Payne, "it's weak, no doubt! That is to say, if I were differently made, more hard-hearted, more sure of myself, I should go, and I should enjoy myself, and moon about, and bore you to death with old stories about the chimes at midnight—everybody would be a dear old boy or a good old soul, and I should hand out tips, and get perfectly maudlin in the evenings over a glass of claret. That's the normal thing, no doubt —that's what a noble-minded man in a novel of Thackeray's would do!"

"Well," said Barthrop, "you know best—but I expect that if you did take the plunge and go there, you would find yourself quite at ease."

"I might," said Father Payne; "but then I also might not—and I prefer not to risk it. You see, it would be merely wallowing in sentiment—and I don't approve of sentiment. I want my emotions to live with, not to bathe in!"

"But you don't mind going back to London," said Barthrop.

"No," said Father Payne, "but that bucks me up. I was infernally unhappy in London, and it puts me in a thoroughly sensible and cheerful mood to go and look at the outside of my old lodgings, and the place where I used to teach, and to say to myself, 'Thank God, that's all over!' Then I go on my way rejoicing, and make no end of plans. But if I went to Oxford, I should just remember how happy and young I was; and I might even commit the folly of regretting the lapse of time, and of wishing I could have it back again.

I don't think it is wholesome to do anything which makes one discontented, or anything which forces one to dwell on what one has lost. That doesn't matter. Nothing really is ever lost, and it only takes the starch out of one to think about it from that angle. I don't believe in the past. It seems unalterable, and I suppose in a sense it is so. But if you begin to dwell on unalterable things, you become a fatalist, and I'm always trying to get away from that. The point is that no one is unalterable, and, thank God, we are always altering. To potter about in the past is like grubbing in an ash-heap, and shedding tears over broken bits of china. The plate, or whatever it is, was pretty enough, and it had its place and its use; and when the stuff of which it is made is wanted again, it will be used again. It is simply fatuous to waste time over the broken pieces of old dreams and visions; and I mean to use my emotions and my imagination to see new dreams and finer visions. Perhaps the time will come when I can dream no more—the brain gets tired and languid, no doubt. But even then I shall try to be interested in what is going on."

"I see your point," said Barthrop; "but, for the life of me, I can't see why the old place should not take its part in the new visions! When I go down to Oxford I don't regret it. I go gratefully and happily about, and I like to see the young men as jolly as I was, and as unaware what a good time they are having. An old pal of mine is a Don, and he puts me up in College, and it amuses me to go into Hall, and to see some of the young lions at close quarters. It's all pure and simple refreshment."

"I've no doubt of it, old man," said Father Payne; "and it's an excellent thing for you to go, and to draw fresh life from the ancient earth, like Antæus. But I'm not made that way. I'm not loyal—that is to say, I am not faithful to things simply because I once admired and loved them. If you are loyal in the right way, as you are, it's different. But these old attachments are a kind of idolatry to me—a false worship. I'm naturally full of unreasonable devotion to the old and beautiful things; but they get round my neck like a mill-stone, and it is all so much more weight that I have to carry. I sometimes go to see an old cousin of mine, a widow in the country, who lives entirely in the past, never allows anything to be changed in the house, never talks about anyone who isn't dead or ill. The woman's life is simply buried under old memories, mountains of old china, family plate, receipts for jam and marmalade—everything has got to be done as it was in the beginning. Now most of her friends think that very beautiful and tender, and talk of the old-world atmosphere of the place; but I think it simply a stuffy waste of time. I don't tell her so—God forbid! But I feel that she is lolling in an arbour by the roadside instead of getting on. It's innocent enough, but it does not seem to me beautiful."

"But I still don't see why you give way to the feeling," said Barthrop. "I'm sure that if I felt as you do about Oxford, or any other place, you would tell me it was my duty to conquer it."

"Very likely!" said Father Payne. "But doctors don't feel bound to take their own prescriptions! Everyone must decide for himself, and

I know that I should fall under the luxurious enchantment. I should go into cheap raptures, I should talk about 'the tender grace of a day that is dead'—it's no use putting your head in a noose to see what being strangled feels like."

"But do you apply that to everything," I said, "old friendships, old affections, old memories? They seem to me beautiful, and harmlessly beautiful."

"Well, if you can use them up quite freshly, and make a poetical dish out of them, for present consumption, I don't mind," said Father Payne. "But that isn't my way—I'm not robust enough. It's all I can do to take things in as they come along. Of course an old memory sometimes goes through one like a sword, but I pull it out as quick as I can, and cast it away. I am not going to dance with Death if I can help it! I have got my job cut out for me, and I am not going to be hampered by old rubbish. Mind you, I don't say that it was rubbish at the time; but I have no use for anything that I can't use. Sentiment seems to me like letting valuable steam off. The people I have loved are all there still, whether they are dead or alive. They did a bit of the journey with me, and I enjoyed their company, and I shall enjoy it again, if it so comes about. But we have to live our life, and we can't keep more than a certain number of things in mind—that is an obvious limitation. Do you remember the old fairy story of the man who carried a magic goose, and everyone who touched it, or touched anyone who touched it, could not leave go, with the result that there was a long train of helpless people trotting about behind the man. I don't

want to live like that, with a long train of old memories and traditions and friendships and furniture trailing helplessly behind me. My business is with my present circle, my present work, and I can't waste my strength in drawing about vehicles full of goods. If anyone wants me, here I am, and I will do my best to meet his wishes; but I am not going to be frightened by words like loyalty into pretending that I am going to stagger along carrying the whole of my past. No, my boy," said Father Payne, turning to Barthrop, "you go to Oxford, and enjoy yourself! But the old place is too tight about my heart for me to put my nose into it. I'm a free man, and I am not going to be in bondage to my old fancies. You may give my love to Corpus and to Wadham Garden—it's all dreadfully bewitching—but I'm not going to run the risk of falling in love with the phantom of the past—that's *La Belle Dame Sans Merci* for me, and I'm riding on—I'm riding on. I won't have the hussy on my horse.

"I set her on my pacing steed,
And nothing else saw all day long,
For sideways would she lean, and sing
A faery's song.

She found me roots of relish sweet,
And honey wild and manna dew.
And sure in language strange she said,
'I love thee true.'"

He stopped a moment, as he often did when he made a quotation, overcome with feeling. Then he smiled, and added half to himself, "No; I should say, as Dr Johnson said to the lady in Fleet Street; 'No, no; it won't do, my girl!'"

LXVI

OF DISCIPLINE

"WELL, anyhow," said Vincent at dinner, commenting on something that had been said, "you may not get anything else out of a disagreeable affair like that, but you get a sort of discipline."

"Come, hold on," said Father Payne; "that won't do, you know! Discipline, in my belief, is in itself a bad thing, unless you not only get something out of it, but, what is more, know what you get out of it. You can't discipline anyone, unless he desires it! Discipline means the repressing of something—you must be quite sure that it is worth repressing."

"What I mean," said Vincent, "is that it makes you tougher and harder."

"Yes," said Father Payne, "but that is not a good thing in itself, unless there is something soft and weak in you. Discipline may easily knock the good things out of you. There's a general kind of belief that, because the world is a rough place, where you may get tumbles and shocks without any fault of your own, therefore it is as well to have something rough about you. I don't believe in that. The reason why a man gets roughly handled, in nine cases out of ten, is not because he is obnoxious or offensive, but because other people are harsh and indifferent. I want to apply discipline to the brutal, not to brutalise the sensitive. If discipline simply made people brave and patient,

it would be different, but it often makes them callous and unpleasant."

"But doesn't everyone want discipline of some kind?" said Vincent.

"Of the right kind, yes," said Father Payne. "Some people want a good deal more than they get, and some a certain amount less than they get. It's a delicate business. It is not always fortifying. Take a simple case. A bold, brazen sort of boy who is untruthful may want a whipping; but a timid and imaginative boy who is untruthful doesn't necessarily want a whipping at all—it makes him more, and not less, timid. One of the most ridiculous and persistent blunders in human life is to believe that a certain penalty is divinely appointed for a certain offence. Our theory of punishment is all wrong; we inflict punishment, as a rule, not to improve an offender, but out of revenge, or because it gives us a comfortable sense of our own justice. And the whole difficulty of discipline is that it is apt to be applied in lumps, and distributed wholesale to people who don't all want the same amount. We haven't really got very far away from the Squeers theory of giving all the boys brimstone and treacle alike."

"Yes, but in a school," said Vincent, "would not the boys themselves resent it, if they were punished differently for the same offence?"

"That is to say," said Father Payne, "that you are to treat boys, whom you are supposed to be training, in accordance with their ideas of justice, and not in accordance with yours! Why should you confirm them in a wholly erroneous view of justice? Justice isn't a mathematical thing—or

rather, it ought to be a mathematical thing, because you ought to take into account a lot of factors, which you simply omit from your calculation. I believe very little in punishment, to tell you the truth; it ought only to be inflicted after many warnings, when the offence is deliberately repeated. I don't believe that the sane and normal person is a habitual and deliberate offender. The kind of absence of self-restraint which makes people unable to resist temptation, in any form, is a disease, and ought to be segregated. I haven't the slightest doubt that we shall end by segregating or sterilising the person of criminal tendencies, which only means a total inability, in the presence of a temptation, to foresee consequences, and which gratifies a momentary desire."

"But apart from definite moral disease," said Vincent, "isn't it a good thing to compel people, if possible, into a certain sort of habit? I am speaking of faults which are not criminal—things like unpunctuality, laziness, small excesses, mild untrustworthiness, and so forth."

"Well, I don't personally believe in coercive discipline at all," said Father Payne. "I think it simply gets people out of shape. I believe in trying to give people a real motive for self-discipline: take unpunctuality, for instance. The only way to make an unpunctual person punctual is to convince him that it is rude and unjust to keep other people waiting. There is nothing sacred about punctuality in itself, unless some one else suffers by your being unpunctual. If it comes to that, isn't it quite as good a discipline for punctual people to learn to wait without impatience for the un-

punctual? Supposing an unpunctual person were to say, 'I do it on principle, to teach precise people not to mind waiting,' where is the flaw in that? Take what you call laziness. Some people work better by fits and starts, some do better work by regularity. The point is to know how you work best. You must not make the convenience of average people into a moral law. The thing to aim at is that a man should not go on doing a thing which he honestly believes to be wrong and hurtful, out of a mere habit. Take the small excesses of which you speak—food, drink, sleep, tobacco. Some people want more of these things than others; you can't lay down exact laws. A man ought to find out precisely what suits him best; but I'm not prepared to say that regularity in these matters is absolutely good for everyone. The thing is not to be interfered with by your habits; and the end of all discipline is, I believe, efficiency, vitality, and freedom; but it is no good substituting one tyranny for another. I was reading the life of a man the other day who simply could not believe that anyone could think a thing wrong and yet do it. His biographer said, very shrewdly, that his sense of sin was as dead as his ear for music—that he did not possess even the common liberty of right and wrong. That's a bad case of atrophy! You must not, of course, be at the mercy of your moods, but you must not be at the mercy of your ethical habits either. Of the two, I am not sure that the habit isn't the most dangerous."

"You seem to be holding a brief all round, Father," said Vincent.

"No, I am not doing that," said Father Payne,

"but my theory is this. You must know, first of all, what you are aiming at, and you must apply your discipline sensibly to that. There are certain things in us which we know to be sloppy—we lie in bed, we dawdle, we eat too much, we moon over our work. All that is obviously no good, and all sensible people try to pull themselves up. When you have found out what suits you, do it boldly; but the man who admires discipline for its own sake is a sort of hypochondriac—a medicine-drinker. I have a friend who says that if he stays in a house, and sees a bottle of medicine in a cupboard, he is always tempted to take a dose. 'Is it that you feel ill?' I once said to him. 'No,' he said; 'but I have an idea that it might do me good.' The disciplinarian is like that: he is always putting a little strain upon himself, cutting off this and that, trying new rules, heading himself off. He has an uneasy feeling that if he likes anything, it is a sort of sign that he should abstain from it: he mistrusts his impulses and instincts. He thinks he is getting to talk too much, and so he practises holding his tongue. The truth is that he is suspicious of life. He is like the schoolmaster who says, 'Go and see what Jack is doing, and tell him not to!' Of course I am taking an extreme case, but there is a tendency in that direction in many people. They think that strength means the power to resist, when it really means the power to flow. I do not think that people ought to be deferential to criticism, timid before rebuke, depressed by disapproval: and, on the whole, I believe that more harm is done by self-repression, obedience, meekness, than by the opposite qualities. I want men

to live their own lives fearlessly—not offensively, of course—with a due regard to other people's comfort, but without any regard to other people's conventions. I believe in trusting yourself, on the whole, and trusting the world. I do not think it is wholesome or brave to live under the shadow of other people's fears or other people's convictions. All the people, it seems to me, who have done anything for the world, have been the people who have gone their own way; and I think that self-discipline, or external discipline meekly accepted, ends in a flattening out of men's power and character. Of course you fellows here are learning to do a definite technical thing—but you will observe that all the discipline here is defensive, and not coercive. I don't want you to take any shape or mould: I want you just to learn to do things in your own way. I don't ever want you to interfere with each other's minds too much. I don't want to interfere with your minds myself, except in so far as to help you to get rid of sloppiness and prejudices. Here, I mustn't go on—it's becoming like a prospectus! but it comes to this, that I believe in the trained mind, and not in the moulded mind; and I think that the moment discipline ceases to train strength, and begins to mould weakness, it's a thoroughly bad thing. No one can be artificially protected from life without losing life—and life is what I am out for."

LXVII

OF INCREASE

I DID not hear the argument, but I heard Vincent say to Father Payne: "Of course I couldn't do that—it would have been so inconsistent."

"Oh! consistency's a very cheap affair," said Father Payne; "it is mostly a blend of vanity and slow intelligence."

"But one must stick to *something*," said Vincent. "There's nothing so tiresome as never knowing how a man is going to behave."

"Of course," said Father Payne, "inconsistency isn't a virtue—it is generally the product of a quick and confused intelligence. But consistency ought not to be a principle of thought or action—you ought not to do or think a thing simply because you have thought it before—that is mere laziness! What one wants is a consistent sort of progress—you ought not to stay still."

"But you must have principles," said Vincent.

"Yes, but you must expect to change them," said Father Payne. "Principles are only deductions after all: and to remain consistent as a rule only means that you have ceased to do anything with your experience, or else it means that you have taken your principles second-hand. They ought to be living things, yielding fruits of increase. I don't mean that you should be at the mercy of a persuasive speaker, or of the last book you have read—but, on the other hand, to meet an interesting man or to read a suggestive book ought to modify

your views a little. You ought to be elastic. The only thing that is never quite the same is opinion; and to be holding a ten years' old opinion simply means that you are stranded. There's nothing worse than to be high and dry."

"But isn't it worse still," said Vincent, "to see so many sides to a question that you can't take a definite part?"

"I don't feel sure," said Father Payne. "I know that the all-round sympathiser is generally found fault with in books; but it is an uncommon temperament, and means a great power of imagination. I am not sure that the faculty of taking a side is a very valuable one. People say that things get done that way; but a great many things get done wrong, and have to be undone. There is no blessing on the palpably one-sided people. Besides, there is a great movement in the world now towards approximation. Majorities don't want to bully minorities. Persecution has gone out. People are beginning to see that principles are few and interpretations many. I believe, as a matter of fact, that we ought always to be simplifying our principles, and getting them under a few big heads. Besides, you do not convert people by hammering away at principles. I always like the story of the Frenchman who said to his opponent, 'Come, let us go for a little walk, and see if we can disagree.'"

"I don't exactly see what he meant," said Vincent.

"Why, he meant," said Father Payne, "that if they could bring their minds together, they would find that there wasn't very much to quarrel about. But I don't believe in arguing. I don't think opinion changes in that way. I fancy it has tides

of its own, and that ideas appear in numbers of minds all over the world, like flowers in spring.

"But how is one ever to act at all," said Vincent, "if one is always to be feeling that a principle may turn out to be nonsense after all?"

"Well, I think action is mainly a matter of instinct," said Father Payne. "But I don't really believe in taking too diffuse a view of things in general. Very few of us are strong enough and wise enough, let me say, to read the papers with any profit. The newspapers emphasize the disunion of the world, and I believe in its solidarity. Come, I'll tell you how I think people ought really to live, if you like. I think a man ought to live his own life, without attempting too much reference to what is going on in the world. I think it becomes pretty plain to most of us, by the time we reach years of discretion, what we can do and what we cannot. I don't mean that life ought to be lived in blank selfishness, without reference to anyone else. Most of us can't do that, anyhow—it requires extraordinary concentration of will. But I think that our lives ought to be intensive—that is to say, I don't think we ought to concern ourselves with getting rid of our deficiencies, so much as by concentrating and emphasizing our powers and faculties. We ought all of us to have a certain circle in mind—I believe very much in *circles*. We are very much limited, and our power of affecting people for good and evil is very small; our chance of helping is small. The moment we try to extend our circle very much, to widen our influence, we become like a juggler who keeps a dozen plates spinning all at once—it is mere legerdemain. But

we most of us live really with about a score of people. We can't choose our circle altogether, and there are generally certain persons in it whom we should wish away. I think we ought to devote ourselves to our work, whatever it is, and outside of that to getting a real, intimate, and vital understanding with the people round us. That is a problem which is amply big enough for most of us. Then I think we ought to go seriously to work, not arguing or finding fault, not pushing or shoving people about, but just living on the finest lines we can. The only real chance of converting other people to our principles or own ideas, is to live in such a way that it is obvious that our ideas bring us real and vital happiness. You may depend upon it, that is the only way to live—the *positive* way. We simply must not quarrel with our associates: we must be patient and sympathetic and imaginative."

"But are there no exceptions?" said I. "I have heard you say that a man must be prepared to lose friends on occasions."

"Yes," said Father Payne, "the circle shifts and changes a little, no doubt. I admit that it becomes clear occasionally that you cannot live with a particular person. But if you have alienated him or her by your censoriousness and your want of sympathy, you have to be ashamed of yourself. If it is the other way, and you are being tyrannised over, deflected, hindered, then it may be necessary to break away—though, mind you, I think it is finer still if you do not break away. But you must have your liberty, and I don't believe in sacrificing that, because then you live an unreal life—and, whatever happens, you must not do that."

"But what is to be done when people are tied up by relationships, and can't get away?" said I.

"Yes, there are such cases," said Father Payne; "I don't deny it. If there is really no escape possible, then you must tackle it, and make the finest thing you can out of the situation. Fulness of life, that is what we must aim at. Of course people are hemmed in in other ways too—by health, poverty, circumstances of various kinds. But, however small your saucepan is, it ought to be on the boil."

"But can people *make* themselves active and hopeful?" I said. "Isn't that just the most awful problem of all, the listlessness which falls on many of us, as the limitations draw round and the net encloses us?"

"You must kick out for all you are worth," said Father Payne. "I fully admit the difficulty. But one of the best things in life is the fact that you can always do a little better than you expect. And then—you mustn't forget God."

"But a conscious touch with God?" I said. "Isn't that a rare thing?"

"It need not be," said Father Payne, very seriously. "If there is one thing which experience has taught me, it is this—that if you make a signal to God, it is answered. I don't say that troubles roll away, or that you are made instantly happy. But you will find that you can struggle on. People simply don't try that experiment. The reason why they do not is, I honestly believe, because of our services, where prayer is made so ceremoniously and elaborately that people get a false sense of dignity and reverence. It is a very natural instinct

which made the disciples say, 'Teach us to pray,' and I do not think that ecclesiastical systems do teach people to pray—at least the examples they give are too intellectual, too much concerned with good taste. A prayer need not be a verbal thing —the best prayers are not. It is the mute glance of an eye, the holding out of a hand. And if you ask me what can make people different, I say it is not will, but prayer."

LXVIII

OF PRAYER

I WAS walking about the garden on a wintry Sunday with Father Payne. He had a particular mood on Sundays, I used to think, which made itself subtly felt—a mood serious, restrained, and yet contented. I do not remember how the subject came up, but he said something about prayer, and I replied:

"I wish you would tell me exactly what you feel about prayer, Father. I never quite understand. You always speak as if it played a great part in your life, and yet I never am sure what exactly it means to you."

"You might as well say," he said, smiling, "that you never felt quite sure what breakfast meant to me."

He stopped and looked at me for a moment. "Do we know what anything *means?* We know what prayer *is*, at any rate—one of the commonest and most natural of instincts. What is your difficulty?"

"Oh, the usual one," I said, "that if the God

to whom we pray is the Power which puts into our minds good desires, and knows not only what is passing in our thoughts, but the very direction which our thoughts are going to take—reads us, in fact, like a book, as they say—what, then, is the object or purpose of setting ourselves to pray to a Power that knows our precise range of thoughts, and can disentangle them all far better than we can ourselves?"

"Why," said Father Payne, "that is pure fatalism. If you carry that on a little further it means all absence of effort. You might as well say, 'I will take no steps to provide myself with food—if God is All-Powerful, and sends me a good appetite, it is His business to satisfy it!"

"Oh," I said, "I see that. But if I set about providing myself with breakfast, I know exactly what I want, and have a very fair chance of obtaining it. But the essence of prayer is that you must not expect to get your desires fulfilled."

"I certainly do not pretend," said he, "that prayer is a mechanical method of getting things; it isn't a *substitute* for effort and action. Nor do I think that God simply withholds things unless you ask for them, as a dog has to beg for a piece of biscuit. I don't look upon prayer as the mere formulating of a list of requests; and I dislike very much the way some good people have of getting a large number of men and women to pray for the same thing, as if you were canvassing for votes. And yet I believe that prayers have a way of being granted. Indeed, I think that both the strength and the danger of prayer lies in the fact that people do very much tend to get what they

have set their hearts upon. A recurrent prayer for a definite thing is often a sign that a man is working hard to secure it. It is rather perilous to desire definite things too definitely, not because you are disappointed, but because you are often successful in attaining them."

"Then that would be a reason for not praying," I said.

Father Payne gave one of his little frowns, which I knew well. "I'm not arguing for the sake of arguing, Father," I said; "I really want to understand. It seems to me such a muddle."

The little frown passed off in a smile. "Yes, it isn't a wholly rational thing," said Father Payne, "but it's a natural and instinctive thing. To forbid prayer seems to me like forbidding hope and love. Prayer seems to me just a mingling of hope and desire and love and confidence. It is more like talking over your plans and desires with God. It all depends upon whether you say, 'My will be done,' which is the wrong sort of prayer, or 'Thy will be done,' which is the right sort of prayer, and infinitely harder. I don't mind telling you this, that my prayers are an attempt to put myself in touch with the Spirit of God. I believe in God; I believe that He is trying very hard to bring men and women to live in a certain way—the right, joyful, beautiful way. He sees it clearly enough; but we are so tangled up with material things that we don't see it clearly—we don't see where our happiness lies; we mistake all kinds of things—pleasures, schemes, successes, comforts, desires—for happiness; and prayer seems to me like opening a sluice and letting a clear stream gush through.

That's why I believe one must set oneself to it. The sluice is not always open—we are lazy, cowardly, timid; or again, we are confident, self-satisfied, proud of our own inventiveness and resourcefulness. I don't know what the will is or what its limitations are; but I believe it has a degree of liberty, and it can exercise that liberty in welcoming God. Of course, if we think of God as drearily moral, harsh, full of anger and disapproval, we are not likely to welcome Him; but if we feel Him full of eagerness and sympathy, of 'comfort, light, and fire of love,' as the old hymn says, then we desire His company. You have to prepare yourself for good company, you know. It is a bit of a strain; and I feel that the people who won't pray are like the lazy and sloppy people who won't put themselves out or forego their habits or take any trouble to receive a splendid guest. The difference is that the splendid guest is not to be got every day, while God is always glad of your company, I think."

"Then with you prayer isn't a process of asking?" I said. "But isn't it a way of changing yourself by simply trying to get your ideals clear?"

"No, no," said Father Payne; "it's just drawing water from a well when you are thirsty. Of course you must go to the well, and let down the bucket. It isn't a mere training of imagination; it is helping yourself to something actually there. The more you pray, the less you ask for definite things. You become ashamed to do that. Do you remember the story of Hans Andersen, when he went to see the King of Denmark? The King made a pause at one point and looked at Andersen, and Andersen said afterwards that the King had evidently expected

him to ask for a pension. 'But I could not,' he said. 'I know I was a fool, but my heart would not let me.' One can trust God to know one's desires, and one's heart will not let one ask for them. It is His will that you want to know—your own will that you want to surrender. Strength, clear-sightedness, simplicity—those are what flow from contact with God."

"But what do you make," I said, "of contemplative Orders of monks and nuns, who say that they specialise in prayer, and give up their whole time and energy to it?"

"Well," said Father Payne, "it's a harmless and beautiful life; but it seems to me like abandoning yourself to one kind of rapture. Prayer seems to me a part of life, not the whole of it. You have got to use the strength given you. It is given you to do business with. It seems to me as if a man argued that because eating gave him strength, it must be a good thing to eat; and that he would therefore eat all day long. It isn't the gaining of strength that is desirable, but the using of strength. You mustn't sponge upon God, so to speak. And I don't honestly believe in any life which takes you right away from life. Life is the duty of all of us; and prayer seems to me just one of the things that help one to live."

"But intercession," I said, "is there nothing in the idea that you can pray for those who cannot or will not pray for themselves?"

"I don't know," said Father Payne. "If you love people and wish them well, and hate the thought of the evils which befall the innocent, and the overflowings of ungodliness, you can't keep that out

of your prayers, of course. But I doubt very much whether one can do things vicariously. It seems to land you in difficulties; if you say, for instance, 'I will inflict sufferings upon myself, that others may be spared suffering,' logically you might go on to say, 'I will enjoy myself that my enjoyment may help those who cannot enjoy.' One doesn't really know how much one's own experience does help other people. Living with others certainly does affect them, but I don't feel sure that isolating oneself from others does. I think, on the whole, that everyone must take his place in a circle. We are limited by time and space and matter, you know. You can know and love a dozen people; you can't know and love a hundred thousand to much purpose. I remember when I was a boy that there was a run on a Bank where we lived. Two of the partners went there, and did what they could. The third, a pious fellow, shut himself up in his bedroom and prayed. The Bank was saved, and he came down the next day and explained his absence by saying he had been giving them the most effectual help in his power. He thought, I believe, that he had saved the Bank; I don't think the other two men thought so, and I am inclined to side with them. Mind, I am not deriding the idea of a vocation for intercessory prayer. I don't know enough about the forces of the world to do that. It's a harmless life, a beautiful life, and a hard life too, and I won't say it is useless. But I am not convinced of its usefulness. It seems to me on a par with the artistic life, a devotion to a beautiful dream. I don't, on the whole, believe in art for art's sake, and I don't think I believe in

prayer for prayer's sake. But I don't propound my ideas as final. I think it possible—I can't say more—that a life devoted to the absorption of beautiful impressions may affect the atmosphere of the world—we are bound up with each other behind the scenes in mysterious ways—and similarly I think that lives of contemplative prayer *may* affect the world. I should not attempt to discourage anyone from such a vocation. But it can't be taken for granted, and I think that a man must show cause, apart from mere inclination, why he should not live the common life of the world, and mingle with his fellows."

"Then prayer, you think," I said, "is to you just one of the natural processes of life?"

"That's about it!" said Father Payne. "It seems to me as definite a way of getting strength and clearness of view and hope and goodness, as eating and sleeping are ways of getting strength of another kind. To neglect it is to run the risk of living a hurried, muddled, self-absorbed life. I can't explain it, any more than I can explain eating or breathing. It just seems to me a condition of fine life, which we can practise to our help and comfort, and neglect to our hurt. I don't think I can say more about it than that, my boy!"

LXIX

THE SHADOW

ONE evening, when I was sitting with Barthrop in the smoking-room and the others had gone away, he said to me suddenly, "There's something I

want to speak to you about: I have been worrying about it for some little time, and it's a bad thing to do that. I daresay it is all nonsense, but I am bothered about the Father. I don't think he is well, and I don't think he thinks he is well. He is much thinner, you know, and he isn't in good spirits. I don't mean that he isn't cheerful in a way, but it's an effort to him. Now, have you noticed anything?"

I thought for a minute, and then I said, "No, I don't think I have! He's thinner, of course, but he joked to me about that—he said he had turned the corner, as people do, and he wasn't going to be a pursy old party when he got older. Now that you mention it, I think he has been rather silent and abstracted lately. But then he often is that, you know, when we are all together. And in his private talks with me—and I have had several lately—he has seemed to me more tender and affectionate than usual even; not so amusing, perhaps, not bubbling over with talk, and a little more serious. If I have thought anything at all, it simply is that he is getting older."

"It may simply be that, of course," said Barthrop, looking relieved. "I suppose he is about fifty-eight or so? But I'll tell you something else. I went in to speak to him two or three days ago. Well, you know how he always seems to be doing something? He is never unoccupied indoors, though he has certainly seen less of everyone's work of late—but that morning I found him sitting in his chair, looking out of the window, doing nothing at all; and I didn't like his look. How can I put it? He looked like a man who was going off on a

long journey—and he was tired and worn-looking —I have never seen him looking *worn* before—as if there was a strain of some kind. There were lines about his face I hadn't noticed before, and his eyes seemed larger and brighter. He said to me, half apologetically, 'Look here, this won't do! I'm getting lazy.' Then he went on, 'I was thinking, you know, about this place: it has been an experiment, and a good and happy experiment. But it hasn't founded itself, as I hoped.' I asked him what exactly he meant, and he laughed, and said: 'You know I don't believe in founding things! A place like this has got to grow up of itself, and have a life of its own. I don't think the place has got that. I put a seed or two into the ground, but I'm not sure that they have quickened to life.' Then he went on in a minute: 'You will know I don't say this conceitedly, but I think it has all depended too much on me, and I know I'm only a tiller of the ground. I don't believe I can give life to a society—I can keep it lively, but that's not the same thing. Something has come of my plan, to be sure, but it isn't going to spread like a tree—and I hoped it might! But it's no good being disappointed—that's childish—you can't do what you mean to do in this world, only what you are meant to do. I expect the weakness has been that I meddle too much—I don't leave things alone enough. I trust too much to myself, and not enough to God. It's been too much a case of "See me do it!"—as the children say.'"

"What did you say?" I said.

"Nothing at all," said Barthrop; "that's where

I fail. I can't rise to an emergency. I murmured something about our all being very grateful to him—it was awfully flat! If I could but have told him how I cared for him, and how splendid he had always been! But those perfectly true, sincere, fine things are just what one can't say, unless one has it all written down on paper. I wish he would see a doctor, or go away for a bit; but I can't advise him to do that—he hates a fuss about anything, and most of all about health. He says you ought never to tell people how you are feeling, because they have to pretend to be interested!"

I smiled at this, and said, "I don't think there really is much the matter! People can't be always at the top of their game, and he takes a lot out of himself, of course. He's always giving out!"

"He is indeed," said Barthrop; "but I won't say more now. I feel better for having told you. Just you keep your eyes open—but, for Heaven's sake, don't watch him—you know how sharp he is."

I went off a little depressed by the talk, because it seemed so impossible to connect anything but buoyant health with Father Payne. I did not see him at breakfast, but he came in to lunch; and I saw at once that there was something amiss with him. He ate little, and he looked tired. However, as I rose to go—we did not, as I have said, talk at lunch—he just beckoned to me, and pointed with his finger in the direction of his room. It was a well-known gesture if he wanted to speak to one. I went there, and stood before the fire surveying the room, which looked unwontedly tidy, the table being almost free from books and papers. But there lay a long folded folio sheet on the table,

a legal document, and it gave me a chill to see the word *Will* on the top of it. Father Payne came in a moment later, with a smile. Then, somehow divining, as he so often did, exactly what had happened, he said, as if answering an unspoken question, "Yes, that's my will! I have been, in fact, making it. It's a wholesome occupation for an elderly man. But I only wanted to know if you would come for a stroll? Yes? That's all right! You are sure I'm not interfering with any arrangement?"

It was a late autumn day in November: the air was cold and damp, the roads wet, the hedges hung with moisture and the leaves were almost gone from the trees. "Most people don't like this sort of day," said Father Payne, as we went out of the gate; "but I like it even better than spring. Everything seems going contentedly to sleep, like a tired child. All the plants are withdrawing into themselves, into the inner life. They have had a pleasant time, waving their banners about—but they have no use for them any more. They are all going to be alone for a bit. Do you remember that epithet of Keats, about the 'cool-rooted' flowers? That's a bit of genius. That's what makes the difference between people, I think—whether they are cool-rooted or not."

He walked more slowly than was his wont to-day, but he seemed in equable spirits, and made many exclamations of delight. He said suddenly, "Do you know one of the advantages of growing old? It is that if you have an unpleasant thing ahead of you, instead of shadowing the mind, as it does when you are young, it gives a sort of relish to

the intervening time. I can even imagine a man in the condemned cell, till the end gets close, being able to look ahead to the day, when he wakes in the morning—the square meals, the pipe—I believe they allow them to smoke—the talk with the chaplain. It's always nice to feel it is your duty to talk about yourself, and to explain how it all came about, and why you couldn't do otherwise. Now I have got to go up to town on some tiresome business at the end of this week, and I'm going to enjoy the days in between."

He stopped and spoke with all his accustomed good humour to half a dozen people whom we met. Then he said to me: "Do you know, my boy, I want to tell you that you have been one of my successes! I did not honestly think you would buckle to as you have done, and I don't think you are quite as sympathetic as I once feared!" He gave me a smile as he said it, and went on: "You know what I mean—I thought you would reflect people too much, and be too responsive to your companions. And you have been a great comfort to me, I don't deny it. But I thankfully discern a good hard stone in the middle of all the juiciness, with a tight little kernel inside it—I'll quote Keats again, and say 'a sweet-hearted kernel.' Mind, I don't say you will do great things. You are facile, and you see things very quickly and accurately, and you have a style. But I don't think you have got the tragic quality or the passionate gift. You are too placid and contented—but you spin along, and I think you see something of the reality of things. You will be led forth beside the waters of comfort—you will lack nothing—your

cup will be full. But the great work is done by people with large empty cups that take some filling—the people who are given the plenteousness of tears to drink. It's a bitter draught—you won't have to drink it. But I think you are on right and happy lines, and you must be content with good work. Anyhow, you will always write like a gentleman, and that's a good deal to say."

This pleased and touched me very deeply. I began to murmur something. "Oh no," said Father Payne, "you needn't! A boy at a prize-giving isn't required to enter into easy talk with the presiding buffer! I have just handed you your prize."

He talked after this lightly of many small things —about Barthrop in particular, and asked me many questions about him. "I am afraid I haven't allowed him enough initiative," said Father Payne; "that's a bad habit of mine. But if he had really had it, we should have squabbled—he's not quite fiery enough, the beloved Barthrop! He's awfully judicious, but he must have a lead.. He's a submissioner, I'm afraid, as a witty prelate once said! You know the two sides of the choir, *Decani* and *Cantoris* as they are called. *Decani* always begin the psalms and say the versicles, *Cantoris* always respond. People are always one or the other, and Barthrop is a born *Cantoris*."

We did not go very far, and he soon proposed to return. But just as we were nearing home, he said, "I think the hardest thing in life to understand—the very hardest of all—is our pleasure in the sense of permanence! It's the supreme and constant illusion. I can't think where it comes

from, or why it is there, or what it is supposed to do for us. "Do you remember," he said with a smile, "how Shelley, the most hopelessly restless of mortals, whenever he settled anywhere, always wrote to his friends that he had established himself *for ever?* It's the instinct which is most contrary to reason. Everything contradicts it—we are not the same people for five minutes together, nothing that we see or hear or taste continues—and yet we feel eternally and immutably fixed; and instead of living each day as if it was our last—which is a thoroughly bad piece of advice—we live each day as if it was one of an endlessly revolving chain of days, and as if we were going to live to all eternity —as indeed I believe we are! Probably the reason for it is to give us a hint that we *are* immortal, after all, though we are tempted to think that all things come to an end. It is strange to think that nothing on which our eyes rest at this moment is the same as it was when we started our walk—the very stones of the wall are altered. It ought to make us ashamed of pretending that we are anything but ourselves; and yet we do change a little, thank God, and for the better. I've a fancy—though I can't say more than that of that we aren't meant to *know* anything: and I think that the times when we know, or think we know, are the times when we stand still. That seems hard!"—he broke off with an unusual emotion: but he was himself again in a moment, and said, "I don't know why—it's the weather, perhaps: but I feel inclined to do nothing but thank people all day, like the man in *Happy Thoughts*, you know, who came down late for breakfast and could say nothing but 'Thanks, thanks,

awfully thanks—thanks (to the butler), thanks (to the hostess)—thanks, thanks!' but it means something—a real emotion, though grotesquely phrased! —I've enjoyed this bit of a walk, my boy!"

LXX

OF WEAKNESS

THIS was, I think, the last talk I had with Father Payne before he left us, so suddenly and so quietly, for his last encounter.

It was a calm and sunny day, though the air was cold and fresh. I finished some work I was doing, a little after noonday, and I walked down the garden. I was on the grass, and turning the corner of a tiny thicket of yews and hollies, where there was a secluded seat facing the south, I saw that Father Payne was sitting there in the sun alone. I came up to him, and was just about to speak, when I saw that his eyes were closed, though his lips were moving. He sat in an attitude of fatigue and lassitude, I thought, with one leg crossed over the other and his arm stretched out along the seat-back. I would have stolen away again unobserved, when he opened his eyes and saw me; he gave me one of his big smiles, and motioned to me to come and sit down beside him. I did so, and he put his arm through mine. I said something about disturbing him, and he said, "Not a bit of it—I shall be glad of your company, old boy." Presently he said, "Do you know what it is to feel *sad?* I suppose not. I don't mean troubled about anything in particular—there's nothing to

be troubled about—but simply sad, in a causeless, listless way ? "

" Yes, I think so," I said. He smiled at that, and said, " Then you *don't* know what I mean, old man ! You would be quite sure, if you had ever felt it. I mean a sense of feebleness and wretchedness, as if there was much to be done, and no desire to do it—as if your life had been a long mistake from beginning to end. Of course it is quite morbid and unreal, I know that ! It is a temptation of the devil, sure enough, and it is an uncommonly effective one. He gets inside the weakness of our mortal nature, and tells us that we have come down to the truth at last. It's all nonsense, of course, but it's infernally ingenious nonsense. He brings all the failures of the world before your mind and heart, the thought of all the people who have fallen by the roadside and can't get up, and, worse still, all the people who have lost hope and pride, and don't want to be different. He points out how brief our time is, and how little we know what lies beyond. He shows us how the strong and unscrupulous and cruel people succeed and have a good time, and how many well-meaning, sensitive, muddled people come to hopeless grief. Oh, he has a score of instances, a quiver full of poisonous shafts." He was silent for a minute, and then he said, " Old boy, we won't heed him, you and I. We'll say, ' Yes, my dear Apollyon, all that is undoubtedly true. You do a lot of mischief, but your time is short. You wound us and disable us—you can even kill us ; but it's a poor policy at best. You defeat yourself, because we slip away and you can't follow us. And when we are refreshed and

renewed, we will come back, and go on with the battle.' That's what we'll say, like old Sir Andrew Barton:

> "'I'll but lie down and bleed awhile,
> And then I'll rise and fight again.'

You must never mind being defeated, old man. You must never say that your sins have done for you! I don't care what a man has done, I don't care how cruel, wicked, sensual, evil he has been, if in the bottom of his heart he can say, 'I belong to God, after all!' That's the last and worst assault of the devil, when he comes and whispers to you that you have cut yourself off from God. You can't do that, whatever you feel. I have been thinking to-day of all the mistakes I have made, how I have drifted along, how I have enjoyed myself, when I might have been helping other people; what a lazy, greedy, ugly business it has all been, how little I have ever *made* myself do anything. But I don't care. I go straight to God and I say, 'Father, I have sinned against Heaven and before Thee, and am no more worthy to be called Thy son.' But I am His son, for all that, and I know it and He knows it; and Apollyon may straddle across the way as much as he likes, but he can't stop me. If he does stop me, he only sends me straight home."

I saw the tears stand in Father Payne's eyes, and I said hurriedly and eagerly, "Why, Father, you have done so much, for me, for all of us, for everyone you have ever had to do with. Don't speak so; it isn't true, it hasn't been a failure. You are the only person I have met who has showed me what goodness really is."

Father Payne pressed my arm, but he did not speak for a moment.

"You are very good to me, old man," he said in a moment. "I was not trying to get a testimonial out of you, you know; and of course you can't judge how far I have fallen short of all I might have done. But your affection and your kindness are very precious to me. You give me a message from God! It matters little how near the truth you are or how far away. God doesn't think of that. He isn't a hard reckoner; He's only glad when we return to Him, and put down our tired head upon His shoulder for a little. But even so, that isn't the end. As soon as we are strong again, we must begin again. There's plenty left to do The battle isn't over because you or I are tired. He is tired Himself, I dare say. But it all goes on, and there is victory ahead. Don't forget that, dear boy. It's no good being heart-broken or worn out. Rise and fight again as soon as you can. I'm quite ready—I haven't had enough. I have had an easy post, I don't deny that. I have suffered very little, as suffering goes; and I'm grateful for that; but we mustn't fall in love with rest. If we sleep, it is only that we may rise refreshed, and go off again singing. We mustn't be afraid of weakness and suffering, and we mustn't be afraid of joy and strength either. That's treachery, you know."

Presently he said, "Now you must leave me here a little! You came in the nick of time, and you brought me a message. It always comes, if you ask for it! And I shall say a prayer for the Little Master himself, as Sintram called him, before

I go. He has his points, you know. He is uncommonly shrewd and tenacious and brave. He's fighting for his life, and I pity him whenever he suspects—and it must be pretty often—that things are not going his way. I don't despair of the old fellow himself, if I may say so. I suspect him of a sense of humour. I can't help thinking he will capitulate and cut his losses some day, and then we shall get things right in a trice. He will be conquered, and perhaps convinced; but he won't be used vindictively, whatever happens. My knowledge of that, and of the fact that he has got defeat ahead of him, and knows it, is the best defence against him, even when it is his hour, and the power of darkness, as it has been to-day."

I got up and left him; he smiled at me and waved his hand.

LXXI

THE BANK OF THE RIVER

THE week passed without anything further occurring to arouse our anxieties, and Father Payne went up to town on the Monday: he went off in apparently good spirits: but we got a wire in the course of the day to say that he was detained in town by business and would write. On the following morning, Barthrop came into my room in silence, shortly after breakfast, and handed me a letter without a word. It was very short: it ran as follows:

"DEAR LEONARD,—*I want you to come up to town to-morrow to see me, and if Duncan cares to*

come, I shall be delighted to see him too, though I know he has an artistic objection to seeing people who are ill, and I understand that I am ill. I saw a doctor yesterday, and he advised me to see a specialist, who advised me to have an operation. It seems better to get it over at once; so I went without delay into a nursing home, where I feel like a child in the nursery again. I want to talk over matters, and it will be better to say nothing which will cause a fuss. So just run up to-morrow, there's a good man, and you can get back in the evening. Ever yours,

"C. P."

It happened that there were only two of us at Aveley at the time, Kaye, and a younger man, Raven, who had just joined. We determined to say nothing about it till the following morning: the day passed heavily enough. I found I could do nothing with the dread of what it might all mean overhanging me. I admired Barthrop's common-sense: he spent the day, he told me, in doing accounts—he acted as a sort of bursar—and he kept up a quiet conversation at dinner in which I confess I played a very poor part. Kaye never noticed anything, and had no curiosity, and Raven had no suspicion of anything unusual. I slept ill that night, and found myself in a very much depressed mood on the following morning. I realised at every moment how entirely everything at Aveley was centred upon Father Payne, and how he was both in the foreground as well as in the background of all that we did or thought. Our journey passed almost in silence, and we drove straight to the nursing home in Mayfair. We were admitted

to a little waiting-room in a bright, fresh-looking house, and were presently greeted by a genial and motherly old lady, dressed in a sort of nursing uniform, who told us that Mr. Payne was expecting us. We asked anxiously how he was. "Oh, he is very cheerful," she said; "his nurse, Sister Jane, thinks he is the most amusing man she ever saw. You must not worry about him. The operation is to be on Friday—he seems very well and strong in himself, and we will soon have him all right again —you will see! He is just the sort of man to make a good recovery." Then she added, "Mr. Payne said he thought you would like to see the doctor, so he is going to look in here in half an hour from now—he will see Mr. Payne first, and then you can have a good talk to him. You are going back this afternoon, I think?"

"That depends!" said Barthrop.

"Oh, Mr. Payne is expecting you to go back, I know—we will just run up and see him now."

We went up two flights of stairs: the matron knocked at a door in the passage, and we went in. Father Payne was sitting up in bed, in a sort of blue wrapper which gave him, I thought, a curiously monastic air—he was reading quietly. The room was large and airy, and looked out on the backs of tall houses: it was quiet enough: there was just a far-off murmur of the town in the air.

He greeted us with much animation, and smiled at me. "It's good of you to come, I'm sure," he said, "with your feeling about ill people. I don't object to that," he added in the familiar manner. "I think it's a sign of health, you know!" We sat down beside him. "Now," said Father Payne,

"don't let's have any grave looks or hushed voices —you remember what Baines told us, when he joined the Church of Rome, that when he got back after his reception, his friends all spoke to him as if he had had a serious illness. The matter is simple enough—and I'm going to speak plainly. I have got some internal mischief, something that obstructs the passages, and it has got to be removed. There's a risk, of course—they never can tell exactly what they will find, but they don't think it has gone too far to be remedied. I don't pretend to like it—in fact it's decidedly inconvenient. I like my own little plans as well as anyone! and this time I don't seem able to look ahead—there's a sort of wall ahead of me. I feel as if I had come, like the boy in the *Water Babies*, to the place which was called *Stop!*" He paused a moment and smiled on us, his big good-natured smile.

"But if I put my head out of the other end of the tunnel, I shall go on as usual. If I *don't*, then I had better tell you what I have done. You know I have no near relations. The noble family of Payne is practically summed up in me. The Vicar's a sort of cousin, but a very diluted one. I have arranged by my will that if you two fellows think you can keep the place going on its present lines, you can have a try. But I don't think it will do. I think it will be artificial and possibly ridiculous. I don't think it has got life! And if you decide not to try, then it will all go to my old College, which is quite alive. I would rather they would not sell it—but bless me, what does it matter? It is a mistake to try and grip anything with a dead hand. But if I get through, and I believe

I have a good chance of doing so, you must just keep things going till I get back—which won't be long. There's the case in a nutshell! You quite understand? I don't want you to do what you think I should wish, because I *don't* wish. And now we won't say another word about it, unless there are any questions you would like to ask. By the way, I have arranged the programme for the day. The doctor is coming to see me presently, and while he is here you can have some lunch—they will see to that—and then you can have a talk to him, while I have my lunch—I can tell you they do feed me up here!—and then we will have a talk, and you can catch the 4.30. You know how I like planning out a day."

"But we thought we would like to stay in town, and see it all through," said Barthrop. "We have brought up some things."

"Stuff and nonsense!" said Father Payne in his old manner. "Back you go by the 4.30, things and all! I have got the best nurse in the world, Sister Jane. By George, it's a treat exploring that woman's mind. She's full of kindness and common sense and courage, without a grain of reason. There's nothing in the world that woman wouldn't do, and nothing she wouldn't believe—she's entirely mediæval. Then I have some books: and I'm going to read and talk and play patience—I'm quite good at that already—and eat and drink and sleep. I'm not to be disturbed, I tell you! To-morrow is a complete holiday: and on Friday the great event comes off. I won't have any useless emotion, or any bedside thoughts!" He glanced at us smiling and said, "Oh, of course, my dear boys,

I'm only joking. I know you would like to stay, and I would like to have you here well enough: but see here—if all goes well, what's the use of this drama?—people can't behave quite naturally, however much they would like to, and I don't want any melting looks: and if it goes the other way—well, I don't like good-byes. I agree with dear old Mrs. Barbauld:

"'Say not Good-night, but in some brighter clime
Bid me Good-morning.'"

He was silent for a moment—and just at that moment the doctor arrived.

We went off to lunch with the old matron, who talked cheerfully about things in general: and it was strange to feel that what was to us so deep a tragedy was to her just a familiar experience, a thing that happened day by day.

Then the doctor came in, a tall, thin, pale, unembarrassed man, very frank and simple.

"Yes," he said, "there's a risk—I don't deny that! One never knows exactly what the mischief is or how far it extends. I told Mr. Payne exactly what I thought. He is the sort of man to whom one can do that. But he is strong, he has lived a healthy life, he has a great vitality—everything is in his favour. How long has he seemed to be ill, by the way?"

"Some three or four months, I think," said Barthrop. "But it is difficult when you see anyone every day to realise a change—and then he is always cheerful."

"He is," said the doctor. "I never saw a better patient. He told me his symptoms like a doctor

describing someone else's case. I never heard anything so impersonal! We managed to catch Dr. Angus—that's the specialist, you know, who will operate. Mr. Payne wasn't in the least flurried. He showed no sign of being surprised: we sent him in here at once, and he seems to have made friends with everyone. That's all to the good, of course. He's not a nervous subject. No," he added reflectively, "he has an excellent chance of recovery. But I should deceive you if I pretended there was no risk. There *is* a risk, and we must hope for the best. By the way, gentlemen," he added, taking up his hat, "I hope you won't think of staying in town. Mr. Payne seems most anxious that you should go back, and I think his wish should be paramount. You can do nothing here, and I think your remaining would fret him. I won't attempt to dictate, but I feel that you would do well to go!"

"Oh, yes, we will go," said Barthrop. "You will let us know how all goes?"

"Of course!" said the doctor. "You shall hear at once!"

We went back, and spent an hour with Father Payne. I shall never forget that hour: he talked on quietly, seeing that we were unable to do our part. He spoke about the men and their work, and gave pleasant, half-humorous summaries of their characters. He gave us some little reminiscences of his life in London; he talked about the villagers at Aveley, and the servants. I realised afterwards that he had spoken a few words about every single person in the circle, small or great. The time sped past, and presently they told us that our cab was at the door. "Now don't make

me think you are going to miss the train, old boys!" said Father Payne, raising himself up to shake hands. "I have enjoyed the sight of you. Give them all my love: be good and wise! God bless you both!" He shook hands with Barthrop and with me, and I felt the soft touch of his firm hand, as I had done at our first meeting. Barthrop did not speak, and went hurriedly from the room, without looking round. I could not help it, but I bent down and kissed his hand. "Well, well!" he said indulgently, and gave me a most tender and beautiful look out of his big eyes, and then he mentioned to me to go. I went in silence.

We felt, both of us, a premonition of the worst disaster. I knew in my heart that it was the end. It seemed to me characteristic of Father Payne to make his farewells simply, and without any dramatic emphasis. The way in which he had spoken of all his friends, in that last hour we spent with him, had been a series of adieux, and even as I recalled his words, they seemed to me to shape themselves into unspoken messages. His own calmness had been unmistakable, and was marvellous to me; but it was all the more impressive because he did not, as one has read in some of the well-known scenes recorded in history of the deaths of famous men, seem to be attempting to say anything memorable or magnanimous. "What can I say that will be worthy of myself?"—that question appears to me to be sometimes lurking in the minds of men who have played a great part in the world, and who are determined to play it to the end. It is, of course a noble sort of courage which enables a man, at the very threshold of death, to force himself

to behave with dignity and grandeur: but it seemed to me now to be an even more supreme courage to be, as Father Payne was, simply himself. Sir Walter Raleigh, Sir Thomas More, Charles II, Archbishop Laud all died with a real greatness of undismayed bravery, but with just a sense of enacting a part rehearsed. The death scene of Socrates, which is, I suppose, a romantically constructed tale, does indeed give a picture of perfect naturalness: and I thought that Father Payne's demeanour, like that of Socrates, showed clearly enough that the idea of death was not an overshadowing dread dispelled by an effort of the will, but that it was not present as a fear in his mind at all, and rather regarded with a reverent curiosity: and I was reminded of a saying of Father Payne's which I have elsewhere recorded, that the virtues to which we give our most unhesitating admiration are the instinctive virtues rather than the reasoned virtues. If Father Payne had appeared to be keeping a firm hold on himself, and to be obliging himself to speak things timely and fitting, I should have admired him deeply: but I admired him all the more because of his unaffected tranquillity and unuttered affection. He had just enveloped us in his own calmness, and gone straight forward.

We made our journey almost in silence: Barthrop was too much moved to speak: and my own mind was dim with trouble, at all that we were to lose, and yet drawn away into an infinite loyalty and tenderness for one who had been more than a father to me.

LXXII

THE CROSSING

THE end is soon told. On the following day, we thought it best to tell our two companions and the Vicar what was happening, and we also told the old butler that Father Payne was ill. It was a day of infinite dreariness to me, with outbursts of sharp emotion at the sight of everything so closely connected with Father Payne, and with the thought that he would see them no more.

I was sitting in my room on the Friday morning, after a sleepless night, when Barthrop came in and handed me a telegram from the doctor. "Mr. Payne never recovered consciousness, and died an hour after the operation. All details arranged. Please await letter." I raised my eyes to Barthrop's face, but saw that he could not speak. I could say nothing either: my mind and heart seemed to crumble suddenly into a hopeless despair.

A letter reached us the same evening by train. It was to the effect that Father Payne had written down some exact directions the day before and given them to the matron. He did not wish, in case of his death, that anyone should see his body: he wished to be placed in the simplest of coffins, as soon as possible, and that the coffin should be sent down by train to Aveley, be taken from the station straight to the church, and if possible to be buried at once. But even so, that was only his wish, and he particularly desired to avoid alike all ceremony and inconvenience. But besides that there

were two notes enclosed addressed in Father Payne's hand to Barthrop and myself, which ran as follows:

"MY DEAR LEONARD,—*I thought it very good of you to come up to see me, and no less good of you to go away as I desired. It is possible, of course, that I may return to you, and all be as before. But to be frank, I do not think it will be so. Even if I survive, I shall, I think, be much weakened by this operation, and shall have the possibility of a recurrence of the disease hanging over me. Much as I love life, and the world where I have found it pleasant to live, I do not want to lead a broken sort of existence, with invalid precautions and limitations. I think that this would bring out all that is worst in me, and would lead to unhappiness both in myself and in all those about me. If it has to be so, I shall do my best, but I think it would be a discreditable performance. I do not, however, think that I shall have this trial laid upon me. I feel that I am summoned elsewhere, and I am glad to think that my passage will be a swift one. I am not afraid of what lies beyond, because I believe death to be simple and natural enough, and a perfectly definite thing. Of what lies beyond it, I can form no idea; all our theories are probably quite wide of the mark. But it will be the same for me as it has been for all others who have died, and as it will some day be for you; and when we know, we shall be surprised that we did not see what it would be. I confess that I love the things that I know, and dislike the unknown. The world is very dear and familiar, and it has been kind and beautiful to me, as well as full of interest. But I expect that things will be much simplified. And please bear this in*

mind, that such a scene which we went through yesterday is worse for those who stand by and can do nothing than for the man himself; and you will believe me when I say that I am neither afraid nor unhappy.

"With regard to my wishes about the place being kept on, on its present lines, remember that it is only a wish, and not to be regarded as a binding obligation or undertaken against your judgment. I trust you fully in this, as I have always trusted you; and I will just thank you, once and for all, for all that you have done and been. I shall always think of you with deep gratitude and lasting affection. God bless you now and always. Your old friend,

"CHARLES PAYNE."

To me he had written:

"MY DEAR BOY,—*Please read my letter to Barthrop, which is meant for you as well. I won't repeat myself—you know I dislike that. But I would like just to say that you have been more like a son to me than anyone I ever have known, and I thank God for bringing you into my life, and for all your kind and faithful affection. You must just go on as you have begun; and I can only say that if I still have any knowledge of what goes on in the world, my affection and interest will not fail; and if I have not, I shall believe that we shall still find each other again, and rejoice in mutual knowledge and confidence. You are very dear to me, and always will be.*

"Settle everything with Leonard. I know that you will be able to interpret my wishes as I should wish them to be interpreted. Your affectionate old friend,

"C. PAYNE."

The last act was simple enough. The preparations were soon made. The coffin arrived at midday, and was buried in the afternoon, between the church and the Hall.. It was sad and beautiful to see the heartfelt grief of the villagers: and it was wonderful to me that at that moment I recovered a kind of serenity on the surface of the grief below, so that in the still afternoon as we walked away from the grave it seemed to me strange rather than sorrowful. With those last letters in mind, it seemed to me almost traitorous to mourn. He at least had his heart's desire, and I did not doubt that he was abundantly satisfied.

LXXIII

AFTER-THOUGHTS

BARTHROP and I decided that we could not hope to continue the scheme. We had neither the force nor the experience. The whole society was, we felt, just the expression of Father Payne's personality, and without it, it had neither stability nor significance. Barthrop and the Vicar were left money legacies: the servants all received little pensions: there was a sum for distribution in the village, and a fund endowed to meet certain practical needs of the place. We handed over the estate to Father Payne's old College, the furniture and pictures to go with the house, which was to be let, if possible, to a tenant who would be inclined to settle there and make it his home: the income of the estate was to provide travelling scholarships.

All had been carefully thought out with much practical sense and insight.

Our other two companions went away. Barthrop and I stayed on at the Hall together for some weeks to settle the final arrangements. We had some wonderfully touching letters from old pupils and friends of Father Payne's. One in particular, saying that the writer owed an infinite debt of gratitude to Father Payne, for having saved him from himself and given him a new life.

We talked much of Father Payne in those days: and I went alone to all the places where I had walked with him, recalling more gratefully than sadly how he had looked and moved and talked and smiled.

It came to the last night that we were to spend at the Hall together. Everything had been gone through and arranged, and we were glad, I think, to be departing.

"I don't know what to say and think about it all," said Barthrop; "I feel at present quite lost and stranded, as if my motive for living were gone, and as if I could hardly take up my work again. I know it is wrong, and I am ashamed of it. Father Payne always said that we must not depend helplessly upon persons or institutions, but must find our own real life and live it—you remember?"

"Yes," I said, "indeed I do remember! But I do not think he ever realised quite how strong he was, and how he affected those about him. He did not need us—I sometimes think he did not need anyone—and he credited everyone with living the same intent life that he lived. But I shall always be infinitely grateful to him for showing me

just that—that one must live one's own life, through and in spite of everything grievous that happens. The temptation is to indulge grief, and to feel that collapse in such a case is a sign of loyalty. It isn't so—if one collapses, it only means that one has been living an artificial and parasitical life. Father Payne would have hated that—and I don't mean to do it. He has given me not only an example, but an inspiration—a real current of life has flowed into my life from his—or perhaps rather through his from some deeper origin."

"That is so," said Barthrop, "that is perfectly true! and don't you remember too how he always said life must be a *real* fight—a joining in the fight that was going forwards? It need not be wrangling or disputing, or finding fault with other people, or maintaining and confuting. He used to say that people fought in a hundred ways—with their humour, their companionableness, their kindness, their friendliness—it need not be violent, and indeed if it was violent, that was fighting on the wrong side—it had only to be calm and sincere and dutiful."

"Did he say that?" I said. "Yes, I am sure he did—no one else could say it or think of it. Of course, we have to fight, but not by dealing injury and harm, but by seeking and following peace and goodwill. Well, we must try—and it may be that we shall find him again, though he is hidden for a little while with God."

"Yes," said Barthrop, "we shall find him, or he will find us—it makes little difference: and he will always be the same, though I hope we may be different!"

LXXIV

DEPARTURE

It was a soft and delicious spring morning when I left Aveley—and I have never had the heart to visit it again. I had had a sleepless night, with the thought of Father Payne continually in my mind. I saw him in a score of attitudes, as he loitered in the garden with that look of inexpressible and tender interest that he had for all that grew out of the earth—worshipping, I used to think, at the shrine of life—or as he sat rapt in thought in church, or as he strode beside me along the uplands, or as he came and went in a hurried abstraction, or as he argued and discussed, with his great animated smile and his quick little gestures. I felt how his personality had filled our lives to the brim, as a spring whose waters fail not. It was not that he was a perfect character, with a tranquil and effortless superiority, or with a high intellectual tenacity, or with an unruffled serenity. He was sensitive, impatient, fitful, prejudiced. He had little constructive capacity, no creative or dramatic power, no loftiness of tragic emotion. I knew all that; I did not regard him with a false or uncritical reverence. But he was vital, generous, rich in zest and joy, heroic, as no other man I had ever known. He had no petty ambition, no thirst for recognition, no acidity of judgment. He never sought to impress himself: but his was a large, affectionate, liberal nature, more responsive to life, more lavish of self, more disinterested than any

human being that had crossed my path. He had never desired to make disciples—he was not self-confident or self-regarding enough for that. But he had continued to draw us all with him into a vortex of life, where the stream ran swiftly, and where it seemed disgraceful to be either listless or unconcerned. I blessed the kindly fate that had guided me to him, and had won for me his deep regard. I did not wish to copy or imitate him—he had infected me with a deep distrust for dependence—I only wished to live my own life in the same eager spirit. As he had said to me once, the motto for every man was to be *Amor Fati*—not a reluctant acquiescence, or a feeble optimism, or a gentle resignation, but a passion for one's own destiny, a deep desire to make the most and the best out of life, and a strong purpose to share one's best with all who were journeying at one's side.

So the night passed, thick with recollections and regrets, deepening into a horror of loss and darkness, and then slowly brightening into the calm prelude of a day of farewell. The birds began to chirp and twitter in the ivy; the thrush uttered her long-drawn notes, sweetly repeated and sustained in the dusky bushes. That sound was much connected in my mind with Aveley. To be awakened thus in the summer dawn, to listen awhile to the delicious sound, to fall asleep again with the thought of the long pleasant day of work and friendship ahead of me, had been one of my greatest luxuries.

I rose early, and made my last preparations, and then, having got a little time before the last meal I was to take with Barthrop, I went round about the garden with a desire to draw into my spirit

for the last time the pure and happy atmosphere of the place.

I saw the beds fringed with purple polyanthus, and the daffodils in the dewy grass. I gazed at the long lines of the low hills across the stream, with the woodland spaces all flushed with spring. I heard the cawing of the rooks in the soft air, and the bubbling song of the chaffinches filled the shrubberies.

I knew the mood of old—the mood in which, after a holiday sojourn in some place which one has learned to love, a happy space of time stained by no base anxiety, shadowed by no calamity, the call to rejoin the routine of life makes itself heard half reluctantly, half ardently. The heart at such moments tries to be grateful without regret, and hopeful without indifference. The purpose to go, the desire to stay, wrestle together; and now at the end of the happiest and most fruitful period I had ever known or was ever, I thought, likely to know, I felt like Jacob wrestling with the angel till the breaking of the day, and crying out, half in weakness, half in strength, "I will not let thee go until thou bless me."

It came, the sudden blessing which I desired. It fell like some full warm shower upon the thirsty earth. In that moment I had the blissful instinct which had before been but a reasoned conviction, that Father Payne was near me, with me, about me, enfolding me with a swift tenderness, and yet at the same time pointing me forward, bidding me clearly and almost, it seemed, petulantly, to disengage myself from all dependence upon himself or his example. He had other things to do, I felt

with something like a smile, than to hover over me and haunt my path with tenderness. Such weakness of sentiment was worthy neither of himself nor of myself. I had all the world before me, and I was to take my part in it with spirit and even gaiety. To shrink into the shadow, to live in tearful retrospect—it was not to be thought of; and I had in that moment a glow of thankful energy which made light of grief and pain alike. I must take hold of life instantly and with both hands. I saw it in a sudden flash of light.

I went to the churchyard, I stood for an instant beside the grave, now turfed over and planted with daffodils. I put aside from my heart, once and for all, the old wistful instinct which ties the living to the dead. The poor body that lay there, dust in dust, had no more to do with Father Payne than the stained candle-socket with the flame that had leapt away upon the air. That was a moment of true and certain joy; so that when I went back to the house and joined Barthrop, I felt no longer the uneasy quivering of the spirit which had long overmastered me. He too was calm and brave; we sat together for the last time, we talked with an unaffected cheerfulness of the future. He too, I saw, had experienced the same loosening of the spirit from its trivial bonds, dear and beautiful as they were, so long as one did not hug them close.

"I never thought," he said to me at last, "to go light-heartedly away—and yet I can do even that! I have heard something, I can hardly say what, which tells me to go forward, not to hanker, not to look back—and which tells me best of all that it would be almost like treachery to wish the

Father back again. It is better so! I say this," he went on, "not with resignation, not with a mild desire to make the best of a bad business, but with a serene certainty that it is not a bad business at all. I cannot tell where it is gone, the cloud that has oppressed me—but it is gone, and it will not come back."

"Yes," I said, "I recognise that—I feel it too; our work here is done, and we have work waiting for us. We shall meet, we shall compare experiences, we shall love our fate. Life is to be a new quest, not an old worship. That is to be our loyalty to Father Payne, that we are to believe in life, and not only to believe in memory."

It was soon over. Barthrop was to go later, and he came out to see me go. Just before I started, the old clock played its sweet tune; we stood in silence listening. "That is the best of omens," I said, "to depart with thanksgiving and the voice of melody." He smiled in my face, we clasped hands; I drove up the little road, while he stood at the door, smiling and waving his hand, till I turned into the main road, between the blossoming hedges, and saw Aveley no more.

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